ROBIN'S . .
READINGS

Parts 1, 2, and 3.

ROBIN'S READINGS.

Part 1.

THE ADVENTURES OF PADDY M'QUILLAN.

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ROBIN'S READINGS.

Part 3.

LIFE IN BALLYCUDDY, CO. DOWN.

A wush ye wud cum hame, Wully,
A'm langin' ivery day;
Naethin's been the same, Wully,
Since ye went away.
A'm gettin' auld, an' far frae stoot,
My hair's as white as snaw;
Cum, while A'm fit tae move aboot,
Afore A gang awa.

KIRK MUSIC.

THE furst Sunday that my brither Wully wuz at hame A tuk him tae the preachin' wi' me, an' A think the meinister had expectit him till be there, fur we got a better sermun than we dae for ordnar.

My! there wuz a quer wheen o' fowk glowerin' at us, an' ye wud a seen the yin dunchin' the tither an' noddin' their heids ower nixt us. A notised Jamey Menyarry whusperin' intil Tam Crickard's ear, but Tam's terble hard o' heerin', an' he's yin o' them soart that'll no' gie in that he's deef, an' he's shair tae anser ye back whuther he heers ye or no'. They sit in the sate jist fornenst us, an' A heers Jamey Menyarry whusperin' till him—

"That's Wully Gordon ahint us."

"It is that," sez Tam, "a terble backward saison, an' there's no' yin bit growin' yit."

Wully had tae get oot his hankerchey tae hide the lauchin', fur min' ye Tam spauk that lood that a' roon us cud heer him.

Jamey put his mooth till Tam's ear agen, an' sez he—

"A wuz tellin' ye that Wully Gordon wuz hame frae Ameriky."

"Dear man," sez he, "A wud like rael weel tae see him."

"There he's ahint ye," sez Jamey.

A declare A didnae ken whaur A wuz sittin', fur the auld buddy jumpit till his feet, an' sez he, leanin' ower the back o' the sate—

"Is that yer brither Wully, Rabin?"

A noddit my heid. Weel, he gruppit Wully by the han', an' gied him such a shakin'; but, as guid luck wud hae it, Tam seen the meinister cumin' up the hoose, so he didnae say ocht, but sut doon an' begood a waggin' his heid back an' forrit, an' mutterin' till himsel'.

A got little guid o' the sermun, an' wuz gled whun we wur oot.

Peggy had the denner reddy whun we went hame, an' it wuznae lang till Wully an' me wur tryin' what it wuz like.

"Ye haenae terble guid singin' yonner," sez Wully.

"A suppose ye wudnae think muckle o' it," sez I, "but A'm sae weel used tae it that A dinnae notis it."

"Wha rises the tunes?" sez he.

"Sammy Tamson," sez I, "a son o' auld Sam that used tae mak' yer claes, Wully."

"He wud be the better o' a whunbush drawed a wheen times up an' doon his throat," sez he.

Peggy lauched, an' sez she—

"A hear the boys sayin' that he brauk his voice yin day wheelin' a heavy borrowfu' o' stanes."

"Agh! haud yer tongue, Peggy," sez I, "the crayter diz the best he can."

"Ye shud get up a koir," sez Wully, "an' buy a harmoneyum; A wud gie a subscription mysel'," sez he.

"Ye dinnae want us pit oot o' the cuntry!" sez I.

"What fur?" sez Wully.

"Fur playin' music in the kirk," sez I.

"A didnae ken there wuz ony herm in that," sez he.

"A'm no sayin' that there is," sez I, "but man there haes been a maist sayrius talk in baith toon an' cuntry ower the heid o' it, an' they say it's agenst the law noo tae play music ether in the streets, or in a place o' wurship."

"Blethers," sez Wully.

"It's as true as yer there," sez I.

"Wuz it the Meer o' Bilfast did that?" sez he.

"Weel, it micht be him got the law made aboot the streets," sez I, "but A think it wuz a wheen big men aboot the Presbytery that passed the law that ye shudnae play ony sort o' instrayments in the meetin'-hooses."

"A niver heerd sich redeekilus nonsense in my life," sez Wully.

"Why, man," sez I, "is that the furst ye heerd o' it?"

"Oh, bliss yer heart," sez he, "A hae heerd plenty aboot it, but A thocht the fowk in Ballycuddy had mair sense."

"They're cleen wuld aboot it," sez I. "Mony an argyment we hae had on the heid o' it, but fur my pert A dinnae tak muckle

interest in it farder nor this that A like tae heer an instrayment playin' rael weel."

"So dae I, Wully," sez Peggy, "there's young Neevin' cums in sumtimes wi' the fiddle, an' auld an' a' as A em it jist maks me feel as if A cud get up an' dance."

"Mebbe that's the rayson that it's wrang tae play them in the kirk," sez I.

"Na, Rabin," sez Wully, "that appears to me to be a thegither in their favour. We shud join in wurship wi' a gled heart, an' fur my pert there's naethin' maks my heart feel sae muckle like what it shud as the rowl o' the urgan whin the music o' it shakes the very hoose."

"Didn't the fowk in auld times play music in their kirks?" sez Peggy.

"They did, Peggy," said Wully, "an' they wur commanded tae dae it; an' there's yin thing," sez he, "we shud aye beer in oor minds, an' that is that it's no tae praise man we sing, but Him that niver changes; an' what wuz pleezin' in His sicht a thoosan' yeers ago is the same this day."

"It's a kureyous thing," sez I, "that oor fowk keeps a harmoneyum fur the waens in the Sunday skule, an' yit wudnae play it in the meetin'-hoose."

"An' whauraboots is the skulehoose?" sez he.

"Jist ahint the pulpit yonner," sez I.

Wully lauched ower ocht.

"A tell ye what," sez he, "if it's wrang till play it in the yin place, it's no richt tae play it in the tither."

"Oh, deed an' they play it in the skule," sez I; "fur mony a time whun A gang early intil the meetin'-hoose A can heer them at it."

"Weel, ye wud be a dale the better o' it," sez Wully. "It wud help the fowk tae sing. My! it wuz a' dismal," sez he, "tae heer yon fowk the day; jist yin here an' there joinin' in."

"A didnae heer ye singin' a note yersel'," sez I, "an' ye used tae be that ye cud sing richtly."

"A cudnae join in ava," sez he. "A wuz gaun tae try the 'seconds' yince or twice, but A wuz sae muckle taen on wi' yer purcenter that A cudnae."

"Weel, ye micht a cummed in *seconds*," sez I, "but nae man need attempt tae be furst wi' Sammy Tamson; he wud sing the tongue oot o' his heid afore he wud let ye get a start o' him."

Wully lauched, an' sez he—

" Dae ye ken ocht aboot music, Rabin ? "

" Na, no terble muckle," sez I. " A can join in whiles if they dinnae start it ower heegh fur me, but the maist o' my singin' is till wee Paddy here."

" A heerd ye singin' the day," sez he, " an' ye din gae an' weel, only ye wurnae fit tae take the sherps."

" Oh, deed, Rabin's no yin bit sherp," sez Peggy.

" Weel, ye wudnae be pleesed if A ca'd him a flet," sez Wully.

" Dae you unnerstan' music ? " sez I.

" Weel, A ken sumthin' aboot it," sez he, " A used tae help them whiles."

Then he cleared his throat an' begood a singin' Letin or sumthin' fur A heerd the wurds—

" Doe, ray, me, sall, fa, fee, fum."

" Man, Wully," sez I, " but yer ower ocht."

" Cum," sez he, " run up the scales wi' me."

" A wull dae that," sez I ; " A'm saying, Peggy, Wully wants the scales ; bring oot that auld pair ye weigh the butter on."

Och, Wully did lauch. Then he tell't me there wuz music scales, an' aboot a man in auld times that they ca'd Pithygorus finnin' oot music wi' hemmers on an anvil.

Weel, he sung the twunty-third samm frae beginnin' till en', an' A declare but A seen the tears in Peggy's e'en. Then he begood an' expleened music till us, an' he said hoo that there wuz scales an' key notes fur till apen a' the tunes, an' he said there wuz crickets, an' quivers, an' dummy quivers, an' Sammy dummy quivers.

Peggy lauched, an' said that wuz the sort Sammy Tamson likit.

" Yon man can sing nane ava," sez Wully, " an' jist luk at the wae he stans ; ye wud think he wuz haudin' up the pulpit wi' his shooders."

" An' what wae shud ye stan' whun yer singin' ? " sez I.

" The wae ye stan' in the mileeshy," sez he ; " keep up yer heid, throw back yer shooders, an' let the mussels in yer chist an' the larks in yer throat get room tae wark."

" There's nae larks in my throat," sez I.

" Weel, there's nae skylarks," sez Wully ; " but that wee box there," sez he, touchin' my throat wi' his fingers, " we ca' that the ' larks ' o' yer throat."

" It bates ocht," sez I.

"Then," sez he, "yer mooth shudnae be as wide apen as iver ye can streech it."

A roared cleen oot at that, an' sez I—

"Man, Wully, did ye see Sammy's mooth, ye wud think he wuz gaun tae swalley his big samm book."

"A wuz vexed tae hear sich singin'," sez he, "but it's the auld story, strainin' at a knat an' swalleyin' a camel, an' hoo fowk can listen tae the like o' yon an' tell ye it's wrang tae hae an instrayment tae help the singin' is mair nor A can tell."

THE BALLYCUDDY PRECENTOR.

SOME lang-tongued buddy or ither tell't Sammy Tamson's mistress what my brither Wully said aboot the wae he condukted the singin' in oor meetin'-hoose, an' there wuz a maist sayrius row aboot it. A cudnae fur the life o' me think what wuz keepin' Sammy awa frae oor hoose, for the crayter, he wud a been in twa or three nichts ivery week, an' wud a sut an' crackit till bedtime. A passed the remark till Peggy yin nicht that Sammy hadnae been in fur a guid while. She shuk her heid, an' sez she—

"A doot, Rabin, ye'll no see him back here this twa days."

"What fur, dear?" sez I.

"Oh, he's huft at what Wully said regardin' his singin', that he wud be the better o' a whun bush drawn a wheen times up an' doon his throat."

"My guidness!" sez I, "A wunner wha tell't him that."

"A hae a gie guid noshin wha carried the story," sez Peggy, "but leest said's suinest mendit; sum fowk's niver content but whun they're carryin' clashes."

"A wudnae say but it wuz Sally Kirk," sez I.

"Weel, it's nae odds wha it wuz," sez Peggy, "but it loast naethin' in the tellin', an' Sammy says what hurts his feelins maist o' a' wuz, that A shud a said he brauk his voice wheelin' a borrowfu' o' stanes doon till the linthole."

A declare that set me a lauchin', an' afore A cud say ocht mair, wha shud apen the daur an' step in but the meinister.

"Weel, Rabin," sez he, "yer as hearty as iver."

"Yis, yer reverence," sez I, "my heart's licht, an' A hae naethin' till bother me, an' there's nae herm in a guid lauch."

"No yin bit," sez he, as he shuk Peggy's han' an' sut doon at the fire in her erm-cher.

"Did ye heer that we're gaun to loas oor precenter?" was the very nixt wurds he said.

"Sit up till the fire," sez I.

"Na, sur," sez Peggy, "A did not heer that; whaur is he gaun till?"

"Oh, he's no' gaun onywhaur," sez he, "but he has sent in his raysignashin, an' A want the kommittee men till cum doon till the manse the morrow nicht till we talk the thing ower."

My, but A felt vexed, fur A wuz feered it wuz a' oor Wully's faut, an' A wuz gled his reverence didnae stap lang. A promised that A wud gang till the kommittee meetin', an' so he jist axed hoo the waen wuz, an' if the moiley coo wuz quat brekin' the tether yit, an' awa he went.

Peggy seen A wuz vexed, so she turned the subjec', an' we said nae mair aboot it.

There wuz six o' us met at the meinster's the nixt nicht, an' we talkit the thing ower till ten o'clock. Jamey Menyarry an' Paddy M'Queelan an' mysel' wur appointed as a deppytashin till wait on Sammy an' see if he would raytract his raysignashin, but if he aye hel' oot agen singin' ony mair we wur till ax him fur his tay at the manse on Thursday nicht, an' we had made it up amang us till gie him a wee praisentashin.

Weel, the three o' us went till Sammy's the nixt nicht. He wuz sittin' at the fireside brekin' up wuthered whuns an' stickin' them below a big pot o' pig's meat that wuz boilin', an' the mistress was dressin' a churnin' o' butter.

We crackit a while aboot the craps an' the wather, an' then sez Jamey Menyarry, sez he—

"Sammy, they hae it gaun that ye're no wullin' till rise the tunes ony mair fur us; A hope that's no' the case."

"Oh, it's true eneuch," sez he, "A think it's time A wuz quat it."

"Na, man, it is not," sez I, "ye hae filled the place this twunty yeer an' mair, an' no that A shud say it afore yer face, A dae not ken whaur we cud get the like o' ye."

"It's no sae said," sez his mistress.

"Oh, sez Paddy M'Queelan, sez he, "Mistress Tamson, if ye believe a' ye heer ye may jist eat a' ye meet."

"Ay, ye hae jist said it," sez I.

"Weel, weel," sez Sammy, "nae metter what has been said or what haesnae, A'll let sum ither buddy try their han' nixt. A think A hae din my pert, an' my soart o' singin's oot o' fashin noo."

"A dinnae ken wha we'll get tae fill yer place," sez I.

"Mebbe ye'll try it yersel', Rabin," sez he.

"Na, man," sez I, "A cudnae start a tune if ye wur tae mak a lord o' me fur it."

We did a' we cud wi' him, but it wuz nae use, an' it wuz as muckle as we cud dae till get him till promise till cum ower till the manse on the Thursday nicht. Paddy wuz quer an' angerry at him, an' whun we wur gaun oot A cud harly get him till haud his tongue till the daur wuz shut.

"A hae nae patience wi' him," sez he, "fur he's as thrawin' as a mule."

We bocht a darlin' Bible in a book shap in Bilfast, an' got Sammy's name put in it in goold letters, an' efther the tay wuz ower in the meinister's we praisented him wi' the book. My! but he wuz weel pleesed, an' whun he got up till return thanks, he cholit up that wae that he had till sit doon. Then his reverence said a wheen words, an' concluded wi' a requist that Sammy wud let us heer his voice afore we perted, singin' the 'Auld Hundred.' Sammy had his handkerchey oot wipin' the tears frae his e'en, but he wuz a' richt by the time his reverence had gied oot the samm, an' he rowled oot the notes, an' made them trimmel ower ocht.

The nixt news we heerd wuz that his reverence had writ a letter till the reverend Mister Wurkman, till sen' a man doon frae Bilfast till sing on a trial, an' it went ower the cuntry like wull-fire that the man wud be doon the nixt Sunday. There wuz very near as mony oot that day as there wuz the day Izek Neelson preeched till us, an' a hale lot o' the fowk sut doon alang the roadside watchin' fur the strange man cumin'. Twa or three o' us met him at the Ballycuddy Junction, an' Paddy M'Queelan tuk the car fur him. Whun the train cummed forrit, the gerd tell't me that there wuz a man in the train had been axin' fur me, an' he showed me the kerriage he wuz in. The gerd apened the daur, an' sez till him, sez he—

"This is Mister Gordon here, sur."

"Oh, indeed," sez the man, an' wi' that he gethered up a big lang percel unner his erm, pit on his hat, an' steppit oot on the pletform.'

Sez I, "A suppoas you're the singin' man."

" Yis, sur," sez he, lauchin', " A'm jist the singin' man."

A pit him up on the side o' the car wi' Jamey Menyarry, an' A got up alangside Paddy M'Queelan, an' we startit aff fur the meetin'-hoose.

" He's a brave dacent-lukin' man," sez Paddy till me, in a whusper.

" He's a' that," sez I.

" A wunner what he haes in the percel ? " sez Paddy.

" A dinnae ken," sez I, " but it's terble like a wheen o' boords."

" It'll be his music book, A'll haud ye," sez Paddy.

A keekit roon at the man, an' he had sumthin' in his han' fur a' the wurl like a sma' pair o' shugar tangs, an' he wud aye gie it a wee thump on the en' o' the car an' pit it till his ear, an' then ye wud a heerd him singin'—

" Doe—ray—fah—saul ! "

A dunched Paddy wi' my elbow tae luk roon, an' he wuz that wae ta'en on wi' the buddy that he very neer let the meer intil the sheugh.

" He's a gie cliver boy that," sez he.

Whun we cum till the meetin'-hoose we had ower a' the bother gettin' in through the fowk, an' we tuk the young man intil the seshin-room. A wush ye had a seen him takin' a wee kame oot o' his wesket pokit an' tittivaitin' aff his heid at the lukin' gless. He put a strecht shade in his hair, an' it wuz that smooth ye wudnae a seen a turned hair in it. He birld roon till me an' axed me fur a gless o' water.

" Jamey, hae ye ony water in ? " sez I, tae Jamey Menyarry.

" Tae be shair," sez he, " there's a big tin can o' it ahint the daur."

A wush ye had seen the man's face whun A handed him a pint tin an' pointed till the can o' water. He lukit at the tin a' roon, an' then laid it doon on the furm.

Sez I, " sur, it's no very nice-lukin', but it's cleen. There's naebuddy but the waens at the Sunday skule uses it, barrin' yin o' the elders noo an' then."

" Oh, it's nae metter," sez he, " A'll jist eat a jug-jug," an' wi' that he tuk a thing like a bit o' rid glue oot o' his pokit an' put it in his mooth.

" Hev ye a koir ? " sez he.

" Na, sur," sez I, " we hae not."

" An' whaur diz yer precenter stand ? " sez he.

" There's nae spayshil pert, sur," sez I, " but Sammy Tamson aye sut on the frunt sate whaur the kollekshin boxes lie, an' whun the samms wur gied oot he stud up wi' his face till the fowk."

" That's very primituve," sez he.

" Weel, it's no fur that Sammy diz it," sez I, " fur he niver cared muckle aboot the Methodeys, sum wae."

The man lauched, an' sez he—

" Hae ye ony place till put up the names o' the tunes ? "

Afore A cud anser him his reverence cum in an' shuk hans wi' the young man. A tell't Paddy M'Queelan till attend till the singin' man while A lukit efter the wants o' his reverence, and A seen or heerd nae mair o' him till the service begood. It wuznae lang till A fun' oot what the man had in his percel, an' what dae ye think it wuz but a wheen sign-boords, ivery yin o' them aboot twa fit lang, an' the names o' tunes prented on them. But it tuk me a' my time to keep my face strecht whun A seen the plan he tuk o' shewin' them aff. He got a peece o' string an' tied the boord till the en' o' a kollekshin box, an' he got Geordie Gunyen's wee fellow tae stan aside him an' haud it up aboon his heid. It wuz rael redeekilus, but efther a' it wuz thochtfu' in him till shew us the names o' the tunes, fur A think naebuddy kent what he wuz singin'. He hadnae muckle help, but aye whun a wheen o' them joined in he wud change his voice an' sing anither wae a'thegither. A heerd oor auld precentor, Sammy Tamson, in the sate ayont me, groanin' ower ocht ; an' as fur his reverence, he changed ivery culler.

A wuz gled when it wuz ower, but the young man wuz a'thegither at hame. He apened his mooth ower ocht, an' ye wud a heerd his voice far aboon a' the fowk, an' ivery time he wuz gaun till rise the tune he pappit the wee shugar tangs into his mooth, an' then put them till his ear.

Whun the meetin' wuz ower the elders an' kommittee men a' met in the seshin-room an' we had a terble scene. His reverence said he wuz vexed he brocht the man, an' as fur Sammy Tamson, he sut doon an' roared like a waen. Whun we got him cheered up a bit, he tuk us yin by yin by the han' an' sez he—

" My deer freens, it's me that's till blame fur a' this, an' A carnae stan' here an' see the Ballycuddy meetin'-hoose turned intil a theayter. Tae think that fur the last five-an'-twunty yeer we hae sung naethin' but 'Mertherdum,' 'New Cambridge,'

'Devizes,' an' the 'Auld Hunderd,' an' noo tae see the daysacrashin that has tuk place. Pittin' up a sign-boord an' singin' quick tunes! A cannae stan' it, my freens. It's waur nor their harmoneyums or parryfrases, an' if ye'll forgie me fur the past, A'll cum back an' rise the tunes as lang as iver A'm able."

His reverence tuk Sammy richt in his erms, an' we a' shuk hans wi' him. The young singin' man went hame that same day, an' it'll be a lang time again afore onybuddy meddles wi' the Ballycuddy Precenter.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1879.

WAENS, dear, but A hae had a wonnerfu' week o' it! They made an elder o' me a while back here in the Ballycuddy Meetin'-hoose, an' A wuz sent alang wi' oor meinister tae the meetin' o' the Assembly fowk in Bilfast. Wully went alang wi' me, an' frae Monday till Seterday we didnae get muckle time tae luk roun' us. A niver sat as lang in a meetin'-hoose at yin time afore, an' it's no likely that iver A wull agen. Hooaniver, whun they did me the honner fur till mak an elder o' me, A beat fur till dae my duty, an' A hae din that till the best o' my ability.

Wully an' me got intil the train on the Monday at the Ballycuddy Junction, an' we wurnae lang birlin' intil the toon. My! A niver seen as mony meinisters in yin hoose in my hale life. Nae metter whaur A lukit A seen their white ties shinin' ower ocht. An' there wuz a' sorts an' sizes o' them' Big lang men; wee short men, big stoot men, wee thin men, auld men wi' white pows, an' young bits o' growin' boys wi' niver a hair on their faces; cross lukin men an' pleesint lukin' men; sherp lukin' men an' stupid lukin' men, ivery sort o' men waur raypresented yonner.

A wonner if a' the tither men wuz elders. If they wur, there maun be a quer wheen o' them. An' then the weemen that wuz yonner bate ocht. Wully said he thocht they wud been better at hame, but A said he wuz wrang there, fur the place wud a lukit naethin' ava withoot them.

Weel, efter A had lukit roon me till a wuz tired, A begood tae tak a lang luk at the pulpit, an' my min' went wanrin' back till the last time that A had seen dear auld Doctor Cooke stanin' in it, an' A jist thocht A cud see him afore my e'en. My, the wae he

cud a steppit up them stairs jist like a king, an' yit as reverent as though he cud feel himself tae be in the very presence o' his grate Mester. An' then tae see him apenin' the Bible, an' tae heer the gran' voice o' him, ivery wurd sae cleer an' distinct, as he gied oot the samm fur the fowk till sing. There niver wuz sich a man in oor fowk afore nor since.

Jist at sayven o'clock a man that they ca' a Purfessor cummed intil the pulpit, an' a richt guid sermun he did preech. He tell't us amang ither things fur till keep till the auld pads, an' no fur till be lukin aboot us fur new roads that we didnae ken whaur they wud lead us till; an' while he wuz talkin' aboot that A notised a guid wheen o' the fowk dunchin' yin anither an' smilin', an' Wully whuspered till me that it wuz the instraymental questyin he wuz tuchin' at.

A axed a man sittin' aside me wha the meinister wuz, an' he said he wuz a Mister Witherem, the oot-gaun Moderater.

"A tak him tae to be a rael cliver man," sez I, "an' A think they shud let him keep the sityeashin."

"Tak yer time a bit," sez he, "an' ye'll see us pittin' in a Coonty Doon man."

"Heth, A wud like tae see that," sez I. "A suppoas it's a gran' thing tae hae that offis?"

"Weel, A think it is," sez he; "the Meer o' Bilfast wud be naethin' till it."

"Hoo mony's gaun in fur it?" sez Wully.

"Jist twa," sez the man, "a Mister Smyth an' Doctor Watts, the Coonty Doon man."

"A hope he'll wun," sez I.

"There's nae doot o' it," sez Wully.

"Is that the man that wrote a' them nice hymms that we used till sing in the Sunday School?" sez I.

The man lauched ower ocht, an' shuk his heid, an' sez Wully, sez he—

"Rabin, A think the Doctor wud luk at ye if he heerd ye sayin' that."

"A'm shair it wud be nae affrunt till ony man till write sich nice hymms," sez I.

Ye had better no speek sae lood," sez the man, "fur there's fowk here wudnae sit in the same sate wi' ye if they thocht ye wud sing a hymm."

" Dear man ! " sez I.

Weel then they begood tae gie their votes fur the Moderater man, an' although A kenned nether o' them A gied my vote fur the yin belangin' tae Coonty Doon. An' in he went a lang wae aheed o' the tither man. He got up then an' made a speech, an' the fowk clappit their han's ower ocht.

" A didnae think they daur clap their han's in a meetin'-hoose that wae," sez I.

" Oh, there's nae herm in that," sez Wully.

" Weel, A dinnae like the soon' o' it," sez I, " an' it luks like a kin' o' desecrayshin. Hooaniver, A suppose it's my ain ignerance o' the ways o' the wurl maks me think that."

" Ye'll heer mair nor that afore ye gang hame," sez the man aside me.

" Wull A ? " sez I.

" Ye wull that," sez he, " efter a while ye'll wonner if yer in yer ain cuntry, an' it'll tak Mister Watts a' his time tae keep sum o' the fowk A see here in ony kin' o' moderation."

" Dae ye tell me that ? " sez I ; " A suppoas that's what they ca' him the ' Moderater ' fur ? "

" A daur say it is," sez Wully, lauchin'.

Weel, what dae ye think but the new Meer o' Bilfast got up on the pletform, wi' his big goold chain roon his neck, an' invited us a' tae gang up tae the big hall whaur the sirkus wuz no lang ago, an' he said he had got up what he ca'd a " conversityerloaney " fur us, an' would be gled to see ivery yin o' us. The fowk cheered him as hard as they wur able.

" It's rael kin' o' him that," sez Wully.

" What sort o' a thing is it ? " sez I ; " did ye iver see yin, Wully ? "

" Ay, mony a time," sez he, " it's a kin' o' a suree, only there's nae speeches made, an' the fowk can walk aboot an' hae a crack wi' yin anither."

" An' wull he gie us a' tay fur naethin', dae ye think ? " sez I.

" Tae be shair," sez Wully.

" My ! but he maun be a gie welthy man," sez I.

Weel, Wully an' me went till the " conversityerloaney " meetin' an' enjoyed oorsels rael weel, an' we attended a' the " seedyrunts " o' the Assembly baith mornin' an' nicht, till A wuz fair tired. A guid dale o' the business wuz dry eneuch fur me. There wuz

a hale lot o' " remoryals " praysented, an' sum o' the men brocht in what they ca'd " overturns," wrote on big sheets o' paper. Then there wuz a lot o' deppytashins frae yin place an' anither, an' we had tae sit an' listin tae speeches. Peggy had put a wee bottle o' heid-salts in my pokit whun A wuz cumin awa frae hame, an' A wuz mony a time thankfu' fur it. There's sum rael cliver men yonner, but there's a wheen o' them, an' it wud be a guid thing baith fur themsels an' ither fowk, if they had stied at hame.

There wuz terble excitement whun they wur argeyin' aboot whuther they wud pit doon the parryfrases or no', an' A declare A cud hardly beleev my ain ears whun they begood tae talk aboot it. A thocht it sae odd, ye ken, tae heer dacently dressed edykated men sayin' the things they did tae yin anither, an' till heer the fowk yellin' " Pit him oot ! " " Sit doon, sir ! " " Haud yer tongue ! " an' sae on, an' gebblin' an' hissin' the wae they wud in a sirkus.

" Deer help us ! " sez I, " but we leev in quer times. A'm nae singer, but A aye likit till heer a parryfrase sung, an' it diz me guid tae read yin o' them."

" They're behin' the age noo," sez Wully.

" Mair's the peety," sez I, " an' A dinnae ken what Peggy wull say if they cut them oot o' the samm book ; she thinks they're the best pert o' it."

" As far as the wurds an' the poatry ir concerned," sez Wully, " she's richt there. What cud be nicer than the fifth parryfrase ? Mony a time it haes cheered my heart, Rabin, whun A wuz thoosans o' miles awa."

" Weel, an' what's the objekshin till them ? " sez I.

" It appears they're no' inspired," sez he.

" Wha sez that ? " sez I.

" A wheen o' elders an' ithers" sez he, " that's mair enlichtened nor you an' me."

" Blethers an' balderdash ! " sez a man aside us. " The samms is pert o' the Bible put intil rhyme, an' so ir the parryfrases, an' the questyin is wuz the man that put the yin intil poatry mair inspired nor the tither."

" An' if it cums till that," sez Wully, " A beleev that we hev inspired men noo-a-days as weel as they had in auld times."

" A beleev that mysel'," sez I, " an' A think the meinisters here whun they hae sae mony fowk afore them shud be tryin'

tae dae them guid insteed o' settin' yin man up agin anither aboot sich trifles."

"It wull dae herm A'm feered," sez Wully.

"Herm," sez I, "man, it wull dae that; the meetin' A belang till haes went that far that A'm feered o' a split in it, an' even in the fowk's ain hooses they're quarrelin' aboot it. There's Jack Gunyin beleevs in parryfrases, an' his wife disnae, an' the tither mornin' because he read yin o' them at femily wurship she hasnae spauk tae him since."

While we wur crackin' this wae we wurnae missin' muckle, fur sum man wuz stannin' up speechifyin', an' maist o' the fowk wur ether glowerin' roon them or talkin' till the yins nixt them, but at last a man bounced up an' said he wud speek, richt or wrang. The fowk made a terble noise, an' the Moderater tell't him he wudnae alloo him till say a wurd. A wuz sittin' at the en' o' a sate, an' there wuz a man oot in the aisle aside me, an' whuniver a noise in the hoose begood, he kept cryin' oot, "Chair! chair!" A grew that angerey at the last that A spauk till him, an' sez I—

"A dae wush ye wud haud yer tongue."

"What fur?" sez he.

"Wha's gaun tae bring you a cher," sez I, "an' sae mony ither fowk stannin' roon ye? Sit doon on yer hunkers if yer tired, or else awa hame."

"A'm speekin' tae the Moderater," sez he.

"Yer a cheeky boy," sez I; "A think the man haes enouch till dae withoot been bothered wi' you, an' he wud luk weel tae gie ye the sate he's usin' himsel.'"

The man jist lauched at me.

"The nixt time ye speek till him," sez I, "dae it whun there's a quate spell, an' dinnae by cryin' fur a cher when fowk canna heer their ain ears."

Wully dunched me jist then, an' sez he—

"Lissen tae this man, Rabin."

A turned roon an' seen that a nice pleesent-lukin' meinister man wuz on his feet speekin', an' he had the fowk a' lauchin'. "If the parryfrases ir wrang?" sez he, "let us set them richt as we did the samms. Whun my hair's a bit throoither," sez he, "A tak a kame an' A kame it back an' front, an' brush it till it's as nice as onything, an' jist let us dae the same wi' the parryfrases."

It's wunnerful the guid a joke diz! The fowk lauched ower ocht, an' fur a bit efter that they conducted themselves bravely.

Weel, then they passed a ressylushin that they wud keep on the parryfrases, but that the Assembly wudnae gie ony sertyfayket that they wur fit to be sung.

The nixt day they got till the argeyin' agen aboot whuther it wuz richt or wrang till sing hymms. It wuz far waur nor the day afore, an' A did think a peety o' Mister Watts. A wuz astonished at yon fowk's menners. A thocht a Ballycuddy consert a rugh place, but it cudnae haud a cannel till yon.

There wuz a gie hearty lauch at yin nice saft quate-like man, Mister Green Peas A think they ca'd him, that got up an' made a speech agen the hymms, an', behold ye, he hadnae richt sut doon till up gets anither man, an' sez he, "A hae here in my han' a hymm-book, that Mister Green Peas himsel' uses," an' then he begood an' read a wheen verses (a kin' o' parody) oot o' it, an' the fowk yelled an' lauched ower ocht. It wuz daylicht the nixt mornin' afore we got awa'.

The nixt day wuz Friday, an' it crooned a'. The hoose wuz crammed that fu', that there wuz nae stannin' room, an' A'm tell't there wuz hunners that cudnae get in the daur. My, but the place wuz hot. A dinnae ken hoo fat men stud it. A thocht sum o' them wud a melted cleen awa', an' A'm shair yin o' them things that they ca' a "workhoose bath" wuz naethin' till it. Weel, the hale blissed day an' nicht they hemmered awa' at that instraymental bizness, an' the wae sum o' them men conducted themsels wuz mair nor middlin'. This yin wud speek, an' that yin wud speek, an' the tither wud speek, an' the fowk wud shout at yin tae gang on, an' fur anither yin tae sit doon. There wuz a wheen men roon whaur A wuz, an' they did naethin' but mak' a noise. Sum wuz yellin' fur "chairs," an' ithers fur "rulers," an' ivery here an' there a man wud jump up an' cry oot—

"A rise tae appoint order." A cud stan' it nae langer, so A startit till my feet an' jumpit up on the sate, an' sez I, as lood as iver A cud speek—

"Sit doon, boys, an' try if ye can be quate."

A hale lot o' the fowk lauched an' clappit their han's, an' cried oot, "pletform! pletform! Hear Mister Gordon, the Ballycuddy elder!"

The hoose grew quate in a minnit, an' A wuz gaun tae slip doon in my sate, but sez Wully, sez he—

" Rabin, ye maun speek whun yer on yer feet ; yer in fur it noo."

A saw A cudnae get oot o' it, so A waved my han' roon my heid, an' sez I—

" A'm ashamed o' the wae a wheen o' fowk roon here is carryin' on. They're jist makin' a noise an' disturbin' the meetin', an' they're the maist onraysonable fellows iver A cum across. A wheen o' them keeps yellin' fur 'chairs,' whun they see very weel there's nae chairs but what's in use, an' ithers o' them keep yellin' for the 'pletform.' Nice boys they wud be on a pletform ! Then a' throo the hoose they're cryin' that they rise tae appoint order whun the fact o' it is they're jist makin' disorder, an' Mister Moderater,' sez I, " if A micht ventur fur till gie ye a wurd o' advice, A wud say fur till hae a wheen o' these yins pit oot."

A sut doon then, an' ye cudnae a heerd yer ears. They lauched an' cheered, an' stampit their feet, an' a wheen o' them kep' cryin' at me, " Ann coar ! Ann coar ! " " A tract ! A tract ! "

" A hae nae tracts fur ye," sez I, " but ye hae muckle need o' sumthin' till read."

" It's no tracts they're axin' fur," sez Wully, " they want ye tae tak' back what ye said."

" That's what A'll niver dae," sez I, " an' only that A dinnae like tae be takin' up the time, A wud a gien them a bit mair o' my min'."

Jist efter that a man got up an' made a speech, but he wud a been better till a held his tongue, fur he insulted the fowk terbly, an' ca'd them simple-minded geese, an' serpents, an' got on wi' sich redeekilus talk that it's a great wonner till me they didnae pitch him oot. It's a queer thing fowk cannae hae their opeenyins, withoot makin' fules o' themsels.

At last the Moderater said that he wud railly hev fur tae exercise his authority, an' he wudnae hear anither word, so they taen the vote, an' if it hadnae been fur the elders we wud a got leev fur till play the instrayments. The maist o' the meinisters voted fur them, but the elders amaist a' went the tither wae.

We haenae heerd the last o' it, an' A doot it's a dark day fur oor fowk whun we let oor min's be led awa' aboot sich trifles. A hope they'll fin' sum way o' settlin' the defeekwulty afore herm be's din that can niver be richtit efterwards. A wudnae like tae see the auld flag pu'd doon an' anither yin hoisted. Guid sen' that a' may cum richt !

THE BALLYCUDDY ELDERS.

THERE haes been a maist sayries lot o' talk in Ballycuddy aboot the wae A conducted mysel' at the General Assembly the time A wuz at it, an' it's commonly reported that a deppytashin frae that buddy ir gaun tae cum doon tae haud a coort o' inquiry on the subjec', an' see if A'm a fit an' proper man till be a rulin' elder. Oor meinister haesnae darkened the daur iver since, an' Peggy's no ower weel pleesed wi' him. He gangs in fur samms an' vokil singin', but he wud nether hae hymms, parryfrases, nor instrayments o' ony kin', an' indeed there's a guid wheen o' the kongreygashin backs him up in his noshins.

The tither Sunday mornin' whun A went intil the seshin room his reverence an' the ither three elders wur sittin' lukin' at yin anither as klum as ye pleese, an' A hadnae richt shut till the daur an' sut doon till the meinister sez till me, sez he—

" Rabin, we wur beginnin' till think ye wurnae cumin' the day."

" Ye'll seldom fin' me absent, sur," sez I, " fur A'm here nae metter wha else staes at hame, an' gie an' affen I hae the seshin room till mysel' on Sunday mornins."

Lang Sam Stevenson spauk oot wi' that, an' sez he—

" Oh, A maun say that Rabin's aye at his post."

" Weel, A aye try tae dae my duty," sez I, " an' A wudnae been late this mornin' ether had it no' been that yin o' the kye brauk intil the Squire's clover fiel', an' A had maist sayries bother gettin' her turned."

" Wuz it the black an' white moiley ? " sez Neevin Erturs.

" It wuz jist her," sez I.

" Mony a time A hae tell't ye," sez he, " that ye shud put the ' langels ' on that beest."

" Ah, puir thing," sez I, " A dinnae like tae deprive ony leevin' thing o' its liberty."

A' this time his reverence wuz sittin' turnin' ower the leeves o' the big Bible that aye lies on the table, and sez he, jist efter A spauk the last words, sez he—

" But, Rabin, there's an inklinashin in a' oor natures tae owerstep the mark whun we're left till the freedom o' oor ain wulls."

"Yer no' comparin' onybuddy till my moiley coo, ir ye?" sez I.

"Na, Rabin, A em not," sez he, "but sumtimes the infayrier enimals gie us wunnerfu' strekin' illeystrayshins o' human natur."

"That may a' be, yer reverence," sez I, "but beggin' yer pardin' sur, ye hae been misinformed if onybuddy tell't ye that my moiley coo wuz an infayrier enimal."

He gied his lip a wee bite, an' sez he—

"Naebuddy tell't me ocht o' the soart."

"It's jist as weel fur them," sez I, "fur A'll niver stan' by an' hear lies tell't aboot either man or beest; A bocht that coo in Cummer Fair whun she wuz a heffer, an' altho' A say it there's no' a better coo in the Coonty Doon. She fills a ten quart can an' a lump o' a piggin wi' milk ivery nicht an' mornin' an' efter it sits a while ye cud cut the crame on it wi' a knife an' fork. She haes jist the yin faut, if she sees a clover fiel' she wud brek thro' the thickest hedge in the cuntry till get at it."

"We hev a' oor fauts," sez Jamey Menyarry, pittin' a lang face on him, an' lukin' at the meinister.

"Weel, Rabin," sez his reverence, "as the chairman o' this seshin it's my painful duty to call attenshin till yer coorse o' conduct at the late meetins o' the General Assembly in Bilfast."

A declare A wuz thunnerstruck. It wuz aboot a minit afore A cud apen my mooth, an' A jest sut glowerin' roon me. There wuznae yin o' them wud luk me strecht in the face. Jamey Menyarry wuz busy rubbin' the crumples oot o' an auld *Mishenary Herald* that he had been carryin' in his breeks pokit; lang Sam Stevenson wuz tryin' till draw sumthin' on the table wi' a big corker pin; Neevin Erturs had pickit up a strae, an' ye wud a thocht his life dependit on hoo mony bits he cud nip it intil wi' his nails, an' as fur his reverence he wuz twirlin' the yin thoom roon the tither an' watchin' a bumbee that had cum in by the wundey, an' lichtit on the ceilin'. A got the use o' my tongue at last, an' sez I—

Yer reverence, did the tither elders ken this wuz till cum up the day?"

"Oh, yis, they did," sez he.

"A ken noo hoo they wur a' sae erly in their places," sez I, "if it had been ocht fur the welfare o' the meetin'-hoose or the kongreygashin they mebbe wudnae a put in an appearance ava."

Jamey Menyarry doobled up the *Mishenary Herald*, an' sez he—

" Cher ! cher ! "

" That's what ye lerned at the General Assembly, A suppoas," sez I, " an' if you an' the likes o' you wud stae at hame an' keep yer ain ' chers ' aside the lum whaur ye ocht tae be, things wud get on far better, an' we wud hae mair peace in the wurl."

" Noo, Rabin, my man," sez his reverence, " ye maun pit a distraint on yer tongue, an' let us gang intil this metter in a quate, calm, Christyin spirit ; furbye that," sez he, " Jamey Menyarry is a dacent, usefu', intelligent man."

" He may be a' that, sur," sez I, " but he's yin o' them fowk that they ca' ' rubstrukshinists,' an' even in the very hoose o' Parleyment the fowk canna get on wi' their business fur them."

Sez Jamey, sez he—

" Yer reverence, A repeal till ye fur tae protekt me."

" Oh, A'm no gaun till lay a han' on ye," sez I, " so ye neednae be scaured."

" Noo, let us set aboot oor business in a' dacency an' sobryety," sez his reverence, " there's a dale o' talk in the cuntry, Rabin, aboot the wae ye get on at the Assembly, an' we hae thocht it oor duty tae speek till ye privately on the subjek."

" If ye heed a' the things the fowk talks aboot," sez I, " ye'll be kep' busy ; A wuz nomynated fur till attend the Assembly, an' A did my duty tae the very best o' my debility. A didnae tak up muckle time, it's true, talkin' blethers an' twaddle the wae a guid wheen did, but whun it cum till the votin' pert A gied a ' plumper ' ivery time fur the richt side."

" A'm feered ye didnae vote as the majurrity o' my kongrey-gashin wantid ye," sez his reverence.

" A voted accordin' till my konshins," sez I.

Sez Neevin Erturs, sez he, " ye had nae business till dae ocht o' the sort, an' whun fowk diz a man the honner till sen' him tae raypresent them onywhaur he haes nae richt tae hae ony konshins," but shud dae what he knows wud pleese the fowk."

" This is a free cuntry, Neevin," sez I, " an' A'll niver let ony man tramp ower me ; ye knowed the sort A wuz, an' ye shudnae a sent me."

" A'm sorry we did," sez he.

" Weel, A wud like tae know what herm A din," sez I.

His reverence brocht a wee note book oot o' his pokit, an' sez he—

" Rabin, a charge o' a very grave kerekter haes been brocht agenst ye, an' A hae put doon the points o' it in writin' fur the sake o' order and regularity. If yer a' reddy," sez he, " A'll proceed tae let ye heer them."

" Wait a minnit, sur, if ye pleese," sez Jamey Menyarry. " till A pit a point on my pencil, fur A wad like till tak sum notes o' what ye read."

A lauched cleen oot at that.

" What ir ye lauchin' at ? " sez Sam Stevenson.

" A'm lauchin' at the noshun o' Jamey takin' notes," sez I.

Jamey's face wuz gie an' cross like, an' A heerd him mutterin' sumthin' aboot " personallertys " ; hooaniver he said naethin' till me, but he axed the meinister fur the lane o' his knife till sherpen his leed pencil. Jamey cud get nae knife, so he dabbit the pencil twa or three times intil his mooth, an' then tried if it wud mak a mark on the edge o' his *Herald*.

" That's a quer place ye carry yer ink bottle," sez I.

Sez his reverence, sez he, an' he cud hardly keep his face strecht, A seen, " as this investygaishin is strictly private it micht be as well no' tae tak ony notes."

" As far as A'm conserned, yer reverence," sez I, " A hae nae objekshuns ; a' the writin' Jamey cud dae is no worth speekin' aboot."

" Mebbe A cud tak notes as weel as you," sez Jamey.

" There's yin sort o' notes ye can tak wi' iver a man A see," sez I.

" What's that ? " sez Jamey.

" Bank notes ! " sez I. " Yer reverence wull excuse me, fur A maun hae my joke, Sunday or Seterday, but whun Jamey haes notes gien till him he gethers them up an' stiks them intil his breeks pokit wi' his face shinin' ower ocht, but whun he's payin' ony o' them awa', ye wud think there wuz wax on them the wae they stik till his fingers, an' his face wull be as lang as a Lurgan spade. A buddy wud think a' his relayshins wur unner boord."

" Oh, railly," sez his reverence, " we maun stap this ; it's very neer time fur wurship. A hae been disposed," sez he, " fur till gie ye a' the ' lettytude ' possible unner the sirkumstances, but A see if A wud gie ye an inch ye wud tak a span."

" What's ' lettytude ' agen ? " sez I. " A haenae got ocht o' the sort since A cum here. A hae got naethin' but imperence."

Then he begood an' read aboot half a dizen pages oot o' his book, but railly A cud not mak muckle oot o' it. A gethered frae it onywae that A had been guilty o' insubordination; that A had indulged in indaykorus conduck; that A had went agen the wushes o' my meinister an' his fowk an' striv fur till interduce a sort o' wurship that wuz nether tollerated by them nor approved o' by the General Assembly.

Whun he had din readin', Jamey Menyarry laid doon his pencil, an' begood a pu'in his fingers till he made his knuckles crack. Neevin Erturs said, "heer, heer," an' Sam Stevenson said "Amen."

"Noo, Rabin," sez his reverence, "we hev thocht it oor duty tae talk till ye privately aboot this metter, an' A hope ye'll apologise fur what ye hev din, an' no alloo the thing till gang farder."

"A hev naethin' till apologise fur," sez I.

"Yis, ye hae," sez Jamey Menyarry, "didn't ye say till my Sarah Jane that we shud get a harmuneyum intil the Ballycuddy meetin'-hoose."

"A did," sez I, "an' so we shud."

"A hope A'll niver see it, my freens," sez his reverence, clespin' his han's, an' wringin' them ower ocht.

"Niver as lang as A'm a rulin' elder," sez Jamey, "fur it's agenst a' the rules o' the Assembly, an' what's mair, it's agenst the Bible."

"Haud on, Jamey! haud on," sez I, "ye maun prove that."

"Niver min'," sez the meinister, "we're no' gaun till say ocht aboot the Bible, nor A'll no' permit ony reference till be made till it; the point is this, namely—that it's agenst the ressylushins o' the General Assembly."

"At the same time, yer reverence," sez I, "fowk cannae shut their e'en till what the Bible sez on the subjek."

Sez Neevin Erturs, sez he, "A'm tell't on a' han's that the Bible condemns it."

"Yer tell't'; " sez I. "Ye shud read the Bible yersel', an' no' let ither fowk read it fur ye."

"Oh, it wuz a dacent, weel-informed man tell't me," sez he, "that there wuz nae authority fur instrayments in the Bible."

"Weel," sez I, "A'll jist kote yin verse, an' that's whaur David tells us tae sing a 'new sang,' an' then a wee bit farder on in the same samm he sez, 'sing wi' the harp, an' wi' trumpets an' cornet.'"

"Ye maun hae dreemed that," sez Neevin.

"Na, A dreemed nane o' it," sez I.

"Is that in the Bible, yer reverence?" sez he.

"Oh, yis, it is," sez the meinister, "but it disnae refer till oor furm o' wurship."

"A tell't ye that," sez Neevin.

"Weel, weel," sez I, "A may be wrang, but A aye thocht the Book shud be oor guide in these things."

"A'm gled yer cumin' roon," sez the meinister, "an' A hae drawed up a wee paper here that A want ye fur till sign, an' A'll read it oot o' the pulpit the day."

"Weel, let me heer it, onywae," sez I.

"Noo, pye attenshin till this ivery yin o' ye," sez Jamey Menyarry.

His reverence read it oot wurd fur wurd, an' here's what it wuz:—

"I, Rabin Gordon, o' Ballycuddy, in the Coonty Doon, hevin' caused offens till the meinister, elders, an' members o' the kongrey-gashin o' Ballycuddy, by givin' expreshin till certain hetterydox openyins, opposed till the law o' the General Assembly, an' alloin same till be printed in a public paper, an' this sort o' conduck bein' kalculated till mak' disturbance in the Church, I hereby apologise an' promise niver agen till presume tae fin' faut wi' ony utterances o' the said Assembly whatsumiver."

A tuk the bit paper oot o' his han', an' spreed it oot afore me; then A lifted a pen as if A wuz gaun till write my name till it. A seen Neevin Erturs, wi' the tail o' my e'e, dunchin' Jamey Menyarry, as much as till say, "That'll fix him." Weel, A kep' them sittin' that wae fur A'm shair five minnits, then A laid doon the pen, an' rowlin' up the wee bit paper A put it intil my weskit pokit, an' sez I—

"A'm gaun up till Bilfast nixt week, an' A'll consult a freen o' mine there aboot gaun wi' me till shew this till the Moderater, or his clark, Mister Orr, a very nice man," an' wi' that A got up till my feet an' lifted my hat.

"Oh, nonsense!" sez his reverence. "Gie me the paper, Rabin," sez he, "o' coorse if ye'll no' sign it we cannae force ye, but the en' o' it may be that we may hev a public investygashin o' the case."

"An' that's jist what A want," sez I. "A'm no gaun tae be tried in a hole-an'-corner fashion. If yer no' pleesed wi' me, jist

bring me up afore a' the kongreygashin, an' A'll be reddy till meet ye ony day. The fowk's a' gethered in noo fur the preechin," sez I, "an' A'm feered there's nane o' ye in a fit state fur wurship; hooaniver, A suppose there's no as muckle herm in that as there wud be in givin' us a wee bit tune on a peeany or a harmoneyum."

"Yer far ower heidstrang, Rabin," sez the meinister, "an' it seems tae me that ye glory in keepin' up strife insteed o' prayin' fur peace."

Sez I, "ye ken very weel that A claim the richt o' thinkin' fur mysel', an' sayin' what A think. Peace is a' very guid in its wae, but there's a time fur war an' a time fur peace. This, at ony rate, ye may rest assured o'—that A'll no' let ony man, meinister or layman, dictate tae me, or meddle wi' me! So ye can a' pit as muckle o' that as ye like in yer pokits."

A walkit oot then, an' went intil my sate in the meetin', but my heid wuz a' throoither, an' A got nae guid o' the sermun.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1880.

A GUID wheen o' the Ballycuddy kongreygashin thocht A wud stae at hame this yeer on accoont o' the wae the meinister an' elders treeted me at the time o' the last Assembly, but agh, the crayters, they kent nae better, an' A wud be sorry to beer them ony ill-wull on the heid o' it. Whun it cum till the nicht fur appointin' an elder tae gang wi' his reverence till the Assembly there wuz sum talk aboot the funds o' oor kongreygashin being' in a deliket state, an' A happint fur till drap the remerk that whaiver went shud pye their ain expenses.

Lang Sam Stevenson spauk oot, an' sez he—

"That's jist the wae till cum at it," sez he, "Rabin maistly hits the nail on the heid, so han's up a' o' ye that'll beer yer ain expenses."

No yin but mysel' put up their han' an' so the thing wuz settled in twa minits, fur ivery yin voted fur me.

Sumwae or ither A didnae tak' the same amoont o' interest in the meetins o' the Assembly this time that A din the last. My brither Wully wuznae alang wi' me, an' A felt lonely. Hooaniver A wuz there aboot the furst, fur a wantit till heer Dokter Watts givin' his fareweel discoors. My! but yon hoose wuz fu'. Why,

the fowk wuz sittin' on the very pulpit steers, an' jist mindit me o' the day A had Izek Neelson in Ballycuddy. The men that tuk up the kollekshins had a gie ticht jab o' it gettin' through the fowk, but it's wonnerfu' the struggle they mak' till get in the happins. Them laidle things wur quer an' fu', an' they maun hae been a sayrius wecht.

Dokter Watts is a fine man, an' an honner till the Coonty Doon. My, but he did preech a gran' sermun, but there wuz times he neer loast his temper.

Efter that wuz ower A didnae attend terble ragelarly. There's aye far ower mony speeches made fur the likes o' me, an', as the new Moderater said, "A'm no shair o' the adeptibility o' my quelifikashins tae the eggziginseys o' the sityeashin," whun A'm sent fur till raypresent the Ballycuddy kongreygashin. A need harly tell ye that the "burnin' questyin," as they ca' it, wi' me an' a guid wheen ithers, wuz the instraymental music, an' A wuz feered they wud argey it "inter-lock-the-daur."

A wuz there on Friday mornin' frae nine o'clock, an' while A wuz waitin' A heerd a guid wheen remerks about chergin' sixpence till a' perts o' the hoose, an' A think it's no richt tae dae that. It jist put me in min' o' a place o' amusement. Weel, erley an' a' as it wuz, there wuz a guid wheen in afore me, an' A notised sum fowk dunchin' ithers wi' their elbows, an' heerd them whusperin', "that's Mister Wurkman's freen, that's Rabin Gordon, the Ballycuddy elder." A tuk nae notis o' them. Mister Orr aye hauds the sityeashin o' clark, an' whun he seen me he lauched an' noddit at me. Mister Orr got up an' said that he had got in reports frae the fowk in Clogher, Cork, an' Dublin. The Clogher Presbytery said that the Enniskillen fowk wur aye playin' the music an' wudnae quat it, fur they seen nae differs in playin' it in a skulehoose an' playin' it in a meeting-hoose. The fowk clappit their han's ower ocht. The ither places wur a' the same.

The Moderater riz up an' axed what they wud dae wi' the reports. No yin spauk, an' Mister Orr lauched, an' wuz jist gaun till pit them intil his big bag, whun up got a meinister an' said sumthin' aboot Dokter Cooke; but afore lang A seen that he jist named his name till get them till lissen till him, an' then he begood a sayin' that a wheen o' men shud be made komishiners an' sent a' roon these kongreygashins till talk till the meinisters an' their wives, an' if they wudnae repent o' their sins o' insubordinashin fur till

punish them, acause the questyin wuznae whuther it wuz richt or wrang till play music, but it wuz brekin' the rules o' the General Assembly. He talkit fur a strucken hour, an' the fowk wur tired o' him.

Then a Mister Craffurd spauk. A thocht he wuz a wee bit personal, fur he lookit strecht across at whaur A wuz sittin', an' sez he, "Is it tae be tollerated, Mister Moderater, that twa or three fowk A'll no' menshin, wull set themsels up in the face o' this Assembly. Luk at this hoose bein' turned intil a rendezvoos," sez he, "fur fowk till cum till fur fun. A hope the questyin wull be settled this day, noo an' fur iver, an' that frae this day forrit the noise o' an instrayment will niver be heerd in Dublin, Enniskillen, Newtownbreeda, or Ballycuddy." Some of the fowk lauched ower ocht, an' ithers cried "Shame" at him.

Oor meinister got up, an' sez he—

"Mister Moderater, A rise till appoint order. We hae nae harmoneyum in Ballycuddy, nor niver wull while A'm there, altho' A'm sorry till say yin o' my rulin' elders is in favour o' it."

A wud a spauk then, but A seen Mister Simson, o' Queenstoon, gaun up till the pletfurm steps, an' A thocht he wuz gaun till mak' a speech, but he didnae say a word, altho' the fowk clappit an' cheered him till they wur tired.

The nixt that spauk wuz the lawyer meinister, Mister Mucknattan, an' a gran' speech he made. He tell't them it wuznae twa or three fowk they had tae dale wi,' but it wuz a big pert o' the Church; an', sez he, "It's no' in the soon o' the voice or in a musickle instrayment that true praise lies, but in the tone o' the heart an' spirit." When he sut doon the fowk cried, "Simson! Simson!" an' clappit wi' baith feet an' han's till he had tae get up. Mister Robeyson wuznae pleesed at Mister Simson takin' sae weel wi' the fowk, so he jumpit up an' yelled oot as lood as he cud that it wuznae fair play tae let twa cliver men speek, the yin efter the tither.

"Agh, haud yer tongue, man," sez Mister Simson, "A jist want till speek before you begin, an' no' hae ye threshin' naethin' but wun'."

The fowk lauched, and shouted, "Weel din, Simson!"

Mister Simson begood then, an' A tell ye what, A dae not know whun A heerd as cliver a speech. My, but it's a gran' thing till be a guid talker. Sum hoo or ither, as a rule, the weemen can

use their tongues far better nor the men, but if Mister Simson's mistress can talk as weel as him, it'll be a gie stirrin' hoose. A wush ye had heerd the fowk lauchin' at sum o' the stories he tell't. He wuz remarkin' hoo that the General Assembly thocht iverybuddy's conshins shud be theirs, an' sez he, "It jist min's me o' Paddy Rafferty an' his da's wull. Whun the auld man wuz badly an' wuz makin' his wull he wuz laivin' money till this yin an' the tither yin, an' his son Paddy wuz stannin' by wringin' his han's an' cryin' that the auld man wuz oot o' his min', an' at last sez he, "Da, dear, dae ye no ken me?" The auld man then said that he wud lee him the Ballytripple ferm. "Salvation," sez Paddy, "my da haes got his senses back!" There wuz grate lauchin' an cheerin' at that, an' we cud a lissened tae him till mornin', but he got cleen tired, an' had till sit doon, an' a wee while efter that they adjurned the meetin' till sayven o'clock.

A went oot an' got a guid cup o' tay an' tuk a danner thro' the toon till efter six o'clock. Whun A got back A seen it wuz weel A went as suin as A did, fur the hoose wuz crammed fu'. Sum o' the fowk kent me, an' as A walkit up the hoose, lukin' this road an' that road fur a sate, they wur shoutin' at me in a' directions, "Cum ower here, Rabin!" "Here's a sate fur ye!" "Whun did ye see Izek?"

A wuz terbly ashamed, an' at last a dacent-lukin' man apened the daur o' the sate he wuz in an' tuk me in aside him. If ye had heerd the wae the fowk clappit their han's an' feet then, an' cried oot, "Three cheers fur the Ballycuddy elder!" "Pletfurm! pletfurm!" "Rabin fur a speech on the Newtoonbreda harmoneyum!"

At last Mister Orr riz till his feet an' waggit his han' at them, an' as suin as he cud be heerd he tell't them that it wuz very likely A wud be requisted till address them afore the argeyment wuz ower, an' he hopit they wud conduck themsels, an' no brek doon the sates.

A man cried oot that they had lifted as mony sixpences as wud pye fur ony damage din.

Sum meinister stud up then an' said hoo that only twa men shud speek time aboot on ivery side, an' then tak' the vote; but the fowk wurnae pleesed wi' that, an' A seen they wantit a nicht's fun fur their money. A wheen men made speeches, an' sum o' the things they said wur very provokin'; but A cleen loast my temper

whun a meinister they ca'd Rabb said it wuz the duty o' the Assembly till pit oot the music, an' they wur bound till persevere till they had got it oot. A cud sit nae langer, so A jumpit till my feet, an' sez I, as lood as iver A cud speek—

"My dacent man, there'll be twa munes in the sky whun ye dae that."

The fowk yelled an' cheered, "Weel din, Rabin!" "Sit up till the fire!" an' the lauchs o' them wuz ower ocht. The Moderater got up, an' sez he—

"My dear freens, this noise an' tumult is no' seemly. A recognise my auld freen frae Ballycuddy, an' A hope ye dinnae mean him ony disrespect. (Cries of Na, na.) I'm gled o' that," sez the Moderater, "accause his grey hairs an' lang service in the Presbytarian Church entitles him till grate respekt. (Cheers.) If Mister Gordon wushes till speek A'll be happy till see him on the pletfurm."

Och, ochone, A wush ye had seen the fowk then! The noise wud a deefened ye. A didnae want till speek, but a wheen men liftit me oot o' the sate an' niver drappit me till they set me doon jist aside the Moderater. He riz an' shuk han's wi' me, an' so did the clark, Mister Orr, an' a hale lot that A didnae ken. Then A steppit till the frunt o' the pletfurm, an' the hoose grew quate in a minit. A liftit up my richt han', an' sez I—

"Reverend feythers, an' deer brithers an' freens, this is an onner A niver did expekt, an' if Peggy wuz heer she cudnae believ her een. (Cries o' "Peggy's a jewel!") A hae argeyed this instraymental bizness in my ain hoose, in the Ballycuddy seshinhoose, an' A ventured till lift my voice a while back in the Bilfast Presbytery meetin' at Dokter Knox's on behalf o' my deer freen, Mister Wurkman. (Cheers fur Wurkman). A'm gled till heer ye cheerin' him, fur there's no' a finer man in the hale Assembly. Weel, A think this haes went far eneuch, an' A wud advise ye till let it drap. (Heer, heer.) As lang as the wurl lasts fowk wull niver be a' o' the same noshin, an' human natur will be human natur till the end o' time. (Applause.) If ye dinnae stap this argeyin' ye'll split the Church. There's men in oor kongreygashin daurnae as muckle as play a penny trump in their ain hoose, nor they daurnae presume till sing a hymm, but there's nae objekshin till them whusslin' them. (Cries of "Bravo, Rabin!") A'm an auld man noo, an' haes seen mair o' the wurl than sum o' these nice-lukin' meinisters an' elders that cums here yeer efter yeer till mak speeches,

an' A can tell ye this, the quate wae's the best wae, an' if there wuznae sich a fuss made there mebbe wudnae be ony instrayments used. (Heer, heer.) The mair ye oppose them the mair they'll be played. A suppoas ye hae a' seen kamemyle growin' in a garden. Weel, it's a fact that the mair ye tramp it the mair it grows an' spreeds, an' hoo that cum till be fun oot wuz by a man in the toonlan' o' Ballyfooter ca'd Jackey Stricklin. There wuz a bed o' kamemyle growin' in Jackey's da's garden, an' aye whun Jackey wuz gaun till a tay perty or ony getherin' he lay doon an' rowled in the kamemyle bed tae gie his claes a nice smell. (Grate lauchin'.) Weel, Mister Moderater, A wudnae tak the liberty o' telling ye that, but A'm enkuraged by the tither speekers tellin' nice wee stories by wae o' illeystrayshin."

The Moderater lauched, an' sez he—

"Nae need till apoleygise, Mister Gordon, ye hae givin' us an important lesson in horteykultural purshoots, an' a hint that may yit be usefu' till many o' us here." (Cheers.)

"Yer honner's a gentleman," sez I, "till admit that the likes o' me cud gie instrukshin, fur A hae tae tak my illeystrashins frae the wurl' as A see it. Weel, as A said afore, there's a dale o' kontreydikshin in human natur. What made Eve, the mither o' us a', eat the apples in the Garden o' Aiden? Jist acause they wur furbidden. (Applause.) What maks my wee granwaen, Paddy, stick a wheatstray in the crame crock an' sook at it till he haes till lie doon? Jist acause he kens his granny wud tak his life if she catched him at it. (Lauchin'.) Noo, that's human natur. There's that moiley coo o' mine that A had tae keep langelled an' tethered fur mony a yeer fur brekin' intil the squire's clover. The sorra a tether or langel cud A get in Newton, but what she cud brek, an' she wuz neer brekin' my heart intil the bargain, so yin day A loused her an' tuk her intil the clover fiel', an' sez I till her, 'there, noo, Spotty, eat till ye burst yersel'.' (Grate lauchin'.) A declare she jist turned roon an' followed me oot o' the fiel', wi' her heid hingin' doon, an' frae that day till this she nether needit langel nor tether." (Cheers.)

A terble purty young meinister got up, an' sez he—

"Mister Moderater, A rise till appoint order. This elder shudnae speek o' a moiley coo till gie an illeystrayshin o' human natur. The man's no' a' there, A think."

The fowk yelled at hum fur till "sit doon!" an' "shut up,"

an' A wuz feered they wud a tuk his life. A jist lauched, an' sez I, "He thinks A'm crakt, but if he burns me fur a fule he'll get wise ashes. (Cheers.) Niver min' him," sez I, "as he grows aulder he'll get mair wut; but mebbe A shudnae a used the exemple A did. Hooaniver, A'll gie ye an illeystrayshin frae rael life this time, as it concerns yin that ye hae a' heerd tell o', an' that's my ain Peggy. (Loud cheers.) Whun wee Paddy wuz gettin' better o' the maisles she went intil Newton till buy him the makin' o' a flennin shurt, an' whun she cummed hame she tell't me she had seen a terble purty chackit shawl, an' that A wud hae till buy it fur her. 'Na, deer,' sez I, 'it wudnae becum ye.' Weel, A got nae peece fur weeks, fur hae that shawl she wud, an' A wud not gie intil her, fur it's no' richt till gie a woman ower muckle o' her ain wae. (Cheers.) At last yin day A thocht A wud try the plan that A had taen wi' Spotty, an' sez I till her, 'Peggy, my wuman, ye can gang intil Newton next Seterday an' bring the shawl hame wi' ye.' She lukit in my face, an' sez she, 'Ir ye in earnest, Rabin?' 'A em, indeed, dear,' sez I. 'Weel, Rabin, A wudnae pit it on my shooders fur a thoosan poon,' sez she. Hooaniver, she loast naethin' by that, fur A bocht her a darlin' silk dress insteed. (Lauchin' an' cheers.) A'll no tak up yer time ony langer, fur it's gettin' late."

A meinister ahint me pookit my tails, an' sez he, "Rabin, tell us anither yin."

The fowk heerd him, an' gied him a clap fur it.

"Weel," sez I, "illeystrashins o' this kin' cud be givin' in thoosans, but A hae kep' ye ower lang a'reddy. (Cries of "Gang on! gang on!") Ye hae min' o' me tellin' at the Presbytery meetin' in Bilfast aboot oor wee dug that haes the bump o' music in its heid, an' aye begins till sing whun it heers the fiddle playin'. Weel, it's a deliket wee thing, an' there's nae wae but yin till get it tae tak' its meet, an' that's tae mak' it beleev that the cat's gaun till tak' it frae it. (Grate lauchin'.) It's as true as A'm here. It'll stan' as lazy-lukin', glowerin' at the plate, but the minit Peggy says, 'Here's the pooshey cumin'!' it teers at the plate, and yirrs ower ocht. (Cheers, an' cries o' 'Sit up till the fire!') Noo, my advice till this honnerable buddy is no' till interfere ony mair wi' this questyin, an' ye'll mebbe hear nae mair aboot it, an' A wush ye ivery yin guid nicht."

Whun they seen A had din they carried me back till my sate, an' the fowk cheered ower ocht, an' cried fur till "vote." There

wuz a guid while's argeyin' then, but at last it wuz agreed that they wud let the thing lie ower till nixt yeer. As A had tuk an ective pert in the matter A wuznae fur gaun till vote, but A'm thankfu' that A did, fur my yin vote jist carried the day. A hope there'll be nae "petition" ower the heid o' it.

THE NEWTOWNBREDA HARMONEYUM.

YE ken A'm terble fond o' music, an' a guid wheen fowk in Ballycuddy thinks me waur than an infidel acause A want them till get a harmoneyum fur oor meetin'-hoose. Mebbe it's acause it's a sin that sae mony fowk ir taen on wi' it. Sum grate man yince said in a book, "music haes charms till soothe the savage breest," an' that's rael true. Mebbe A'm a bit o' a savage whun A'm sae fand o' it. A ken this, that whun A get oot o' sorts at ony time a birl o' the fiddle jist pits me richt.

Weel, A tuk a grate likin' till Mister Wurkman, o' Newtownbreeda, jist acause he made a stan', an' shewed he had a richt till play music in his meetin'-hoose, an' wud continye till play it till the majority o' his heerers tell't him tae quat it. His fowk had a "conversityerloney" in his skulehoose yin nicht a wheen months back, an' they sent me a very kin'ly invitashin till gang till it. Weel, they wud tak' nae denial, so A went, an' railly A niver did in a' my trevils meet wi' nicer or kin'er fowk. As fur his reverence, Mister Wurkman, he met me as if we had been auld freens, an' he made me promis that A wud gang back an' spen' a nicht wi' him at his ain hoose.

A hae niver been able as yet till fulfil my promis, but whun A heerd, a wheen days ago that Mister Wurkman was gaun till be tried agen afore a meetin' o' the Synod, A wuznae lang finnin' an excuse till gang till Bilfast till heer it, an' till stan' by his reverence if needfu'. A called wi' Mister Mayne that keeps the book shap, an' he pit on his hat an' said he wud show me whaur the Linenhall Street meetin'-hoose wuz, an' he niver left me till he tuk me inside an' got me intil a nice cushined sate gie an' weel forrit in the hoose. A wuz a bit late, an' the Synodmen wur busy talkin' aboot sum claim that a meinister's weedow had agen his heerers, an' A thocht frae what A heerd that they had been a wee bit hard wi' her. My, it's a quer wurl' this! Yer no lang oot o' sicht till a' yer laibers

fur the guid o' yer fellow-men ir furgotten, an' the very fowk that ye striv nicht an' day, heart an' soul, till serve, ir the furst till throw a slicht on yer name, an' show a cauld shooder till them ye hae left ahint ye!

Weel, Mister Wurkman's case cummed on nixt, an' A wush ye had seen the fowk's faces, hoo excited lukin' they grew. Why, a trial in the coorthoose wud be nixt tae naethin' compered wi' thon. A spauk till a man in the sate wi' me, an' axed him if Mister Wurkman wuz cum yit."

"Oh, ay," sez he, "there's no muckle danger o' him shirkin' his duty."

"Wha is he this man that's gaun till hae him tried?" sez I.

"A terble cliver buddy that belangs till his ain meetin'-hoose," sez he.

"The deer man!" sez I, "yin o' his ain heerers! An a cliver yin, ye say?"

"A dinnae ken," sez he, "but he maun be sumthin' mair nor ordnor', whun he'll mak his meinister an' fowk dae jist what he wants; an' no' that alane, but he'll shew ye efter a bit that he can lay doon the law an' the Gospel till Presbytery, Synod, an' General Assembly."

Sumbuddy cried "Silence!!" jist then, an' we had tae quat talkin'.

Yin o' the meinisters read oot a paper, an' it appeared that this man had brocht up a compleent afore the Bilfast Presbytery agenst Mister Wurkman, but they had throwed it oot, an' so, rether than gie in, he brocht his compleent noo till the heecher Church Coort o' the Synod. Weel, then, the man himsel' got up till mak his cherge, an' he begood his story by givin' himsel' a grate lang serty-fecat o' kerekter. He said he wuz a loyal Presbytarian, an' had nae earthly desire in this life ayont the weel daein' o' the Newtoonbreda Kirk; that he wuz a great lover o' peace, that the Kirk wudnae prosper till there wuz peace, an' he wuz determined no' tae gie them ony peace till they cum roon till his views an' did whativer he wantit, an' therefore this reverend coort wud see that it wud be weel fur them till upset the verdict o' the Presbytery an' gie a verdict in his favour. He hopit they wudnae compel him fur till tak his case afore the General Assembly; hooaniver, they wur till unnerstan' that he wud dae that if needfu'. Mister Wurkman had rebelled agen the sacred laws o' the General Assembly, an' if he wudnae be

punished in time an' made tae feel that he wuz bound tae comply wi' ivery thing that that buddy ordered, there wuz nae knowin' whaur the rebellion wud stap, an' the General Assembly itself wud be destroyed. He had a grate respekt fur Mister Wurkman, but he wuz an ootlaw agenst the Bible an' the Kirk, an' had hurt his feelins very much, an' noo that he had ta'en this thing up, he wud follow it till the end. If this coort didnae see richt, or hadnae the courage till dale wi' the questyin, he wud tak' it frae that coort till the General Assembly, aye, or if needfu', knowin' that the subjeck wuz o' sich vast importens till the hale human race, he wud tak it till the Hoose o' Commons, the Hoose o' Lords, an' efter that lay it at the fit o' the Throne o' Queen Victoryee!

He had nae richt sut doon till A seen Mister Wurkman jumpin' till his feet, an' that minit the fowk clappit their han's ower ocht. He didnae get leev till speek then, fur they said he wuz oot o' order, an' they argeyed amang themsels fur a guid while what they shud dae nixt. At last Dokter Knocks an' a meinister ca'd Mister Herron wuz appointed on behalf o' the Presbytery till show that they had din what wuz richt in throwin' oot the man's cherge. They did their pert rael weel, an' shewed that as sensible men they cud dae naethin' else but throw oot the cherge. Mister Wurkman had only played music at extra meetins an' no' at the regular meetins, an' they drappit a wheen hints that even if he played it at a' times it wud be nae easy job till shew that he wuz wrang.

They allooed Mister Wurkman till speek then, an' a richt hearty clap the fowk gied him whun he riz up. He said he thocht this thing had been drappit, an' it wuz only on the Seterday afore that he wuz tell't it wuz tae gang on. The man had haen sum ithers till support him in the metter, but they had a' drappit it except himsel'. "A hae been cherged," sez he, liftin' his voice, "as a lawbreker, an' wi' insubordinashin agenst the General Assembly; hooaniver, A'm sae weel accustomed noo till that kin' o' thing that A pye nae heed till it. A deny that A hae din ocht wrang; A claim the liberty till hae music at the extra services, but A dae mair nor that fur A claim the richt till use it at ivery service! (Grate cheerin'.) If ye send a kommittee oot till mak a search throo a' the meetin-'hooses they'll fa' in wi' a guid wheen o' instrayments—an' efter a' Mister Johnson's ressylushins they wud fin' a peanny stanin' on its fower legs up in Toonsend Street meetin'-hoose. (Grate lauchin' an' clappin' o' han's.) A'm feered ye hae let yer min's be carried

awa' wi' that abominable *Banner*," sez he, but they stappit him then; an' a wheen o' them riz the maist tremenjus whulabaloo iver ye heerd.

A cudnae mak heid or tail o' it fur a bit, an' sez I till the man aside me—

" Shair nane o' them pits up flags in their meetin'-hooses."

He lauched, an' sez he, " Oh, na; the *Banner's* no' a flag; it's a wee bit o' a penny paper, a kin' o' a squib thing that's no muckle thocht o' except by a wheen o' men that writes fur it."

Sez yin o' the meinisters, sez he, shuttin' his fist an' stampin' his fit—

" A'll no' sit here an' alloo ony man or ony meinister till say a wurd agen that paper, an' A call on Mister Wurkman till raytract the wurd 'abominable.' "

Mister Wurkman brocht his han' doon sich a slap on the back o' a sate, an' sez he—

" A say it *is* abominable ! "

There wuz a terble scene then, an' A cudnae hear my ain ears. Mister Herron stud up, an' sez he, " It's nae peeryodical o' oors ! It disnae raypresent the Presbytarians ! " an' A wush ye had a heerd hoo that pleesed the fowk. At last Mister Wurkman said he wud withdraw it, but that he had got great provokashin frae the *Banner*, fur it had cherged him wi' a' soarts o' ekklesastyel offences, an wuz ayc breedin' quarrels atween meinister an' fowk. Weel, then he got gaun on wi' his speech, but I cannae min' it a'. " Shairly," sez he, " ye'll no' objekt till me hevin' extra services. Hoo ir meinisters till okepy their spare time ? Sum o' them bigg hooses, sum keep ferms, ithers mak' elekshin speeches, an' ithers that can dae nae better write fur the *Banner*."

My, he did keep them lauchin' ower ocht. Whun he sut doon A had wurked my feelins up till sich a pitch that afore A kent what A wuz aboot A wuz stannin' on a wee fut stool that wuz in the sate an' addressin' mysel' till the cherman. A wush ye had heerd them then. A' roon me they wur cryin' " Cher ! order ! order! "

The cherman got up, an' whun he cud be heerd, he lukit doon at me an' axed me wha A wuz. That brocht me back till my senses, an' A drappit ontil my sate agen as if A had been shot. Mister Wurkman jumpit up, an' sez he—

" Mister Moderater, A recognise in this old gentleman a warm freen o' the Presbytarian Church, an' a highly esteemed freen

o' my ain. He's a rulin' elder in the Ballycuddy kongreygashin, an' haes cum a lang jurney till be here. Tho' perhaps oot o' order, ye micht let him speek."

"Wi' pleesure," sez the Moderater; but what A wantit till say flew oot o' my heid; hooaniver A had till say sumthin'.

"Mister Moderater and reverend brithers," sez I, "A feel that A'm oot o' place in pittin in my tongue here amang weel lerned men, but like the auld wuman at Bellynehinch that shoodered the beesom shank till shew what side she wuz on, A tak' this appertunity o' sayin' a wurd on the present occasion fur my freen Mister Wurkman, an' fur the peace o' the Kirk that A luv deerly. (Heer, heer.) In my humble opeenyin there haes been far ower muckle blethers an' balderdash talkit aboot this music questyin the last wheen years. (Cries of "Order!" an' "Questyin!") Ye neednae bother yer heids pittin ony 'questyin' till me nor givin' ony o' yer 'orders,' fur A hae got permission frae the Reverend Moderater till speek, an' A'll no' be lang if ye jist sit still an' haud yer wheest. (Grate lauchin' an' clappin'.) A dinnae ken this man that has brocht this cherge agenst Mister Wurkman, an' theerfur it's no fur me till say ocht agen him. He haes gien himsel' a furst-class kerekter here the day, an' frae what he says he's a man in whom there's no 'guile,' but A wud jist venter till gie him the advice that A wud tak mysel', an' that is that if he wants peace, an' sees that the Newtoonbreda fowk wull hev their music, what's the use o' him fechtin' wi' them? That's what A wud like to ken. Why dizn't he gang whaur there's nae music? (Heer, heer.) A hae aye been brocht up till beleev that there's music in Heaven, an' if that's the case, why shud we no' use it fur praise here? If it's a fact that there's harps an' ither music there, sum fowks naters wull hae till be querly changed afore they gang till the Happy Land. The wurl's wide, sur, an' there's room fur us a', an' my advice wud be no' tae interfere in this metter ony farder. If we wur a' o' yin min' in this wurl' we cudnae get on ava. Deer knows wha wud a got my Peggy, fur instens, if ye had a' been o' the same noshin as A wuz at the time A wuz coortin' her. (Grate lauchin'.) The fact is there's nae accoontin' fur tastes, an' my brither Wully sez it's a' owin' till the shape o' the heid (Heer, heer.) Noo very likely this man haesnae the bump o' music in his heid. (The man got up till speek then, but the Moderater tell't him till sit doon.) A cud tell ye a sirkumstans that cums intil my heid by wae o' illeystrayshin if A'm no' keepin' ye

ower lang. (Cries o' "Gang on!") Sam Tamson cums intil oor hoose sumtimes wi' his fiddle, an' it wud bring teers till yer e'en till heer him playin' 'Ye banks an' braes o' bonnie Doon,' or the 'Exile o' Erin'; an' then whun he gies his fiddlestick a flurish, an' rattles aff 'The White Cockade,' or the 'Blue Bonnets ower the Border,' or a bit o' an Irish reel, as shair as A'm here but it excites me that wae that if there's naebuddy in the hoose that A can hae a step wi, A mony a time play fit-ba' wi' my auld hat throo the flair. (Lauchin' and cheers.) Weel, A hae a wee terrier dug thonner at hame, an' it haes the bump o' music' (Cheers.) It haes, indeed; an' whun the fiddle starts, mony a time it rins roon an' roon efter its tail till it tummels ower the buddy, wi' fair dizziness. (Grate lauchin'.) It's as true as A'm tellin' it till ye. Weel, there's Jamey Menyarry's dug, an' whin it heers music it gets cleen oot o' temper, yowls an' bites at a' roon it. A'll no' trespass farder on yer valyeable time, fur A think A hae proved ayont a' dispute, that fowk differs in their naters, so A hope ye'll let iverybuddy pleese themsels in this metter. A wud move a ressylushin, but mebbe A wud be interferin' wi' that meinister frae Toonsend Street, that A'm tell't is sich a guid han' at that kin' o' thing, an' so thankin' ye fur the honner ye hae din me, A'll noo sit doon."

Weel, A wush ye had heerd the way the fowk lauched an' cheered. A wheen men got up till speek, but the Moderater said their freen frae Ballycuddy had put the hale thing in a nut-shell, an' in the face o' his speech it wud be only a waste o' time to say ocht mair.

Dokter Johnson moved a ressylushin wantin' till fin' Mister Wurkman guilty o' brekin' the law, an' he made a lang speech, but it wuz a' no use, fur while he wus talkin' a meinister ca'd Mucknattan—as cliver as a lawyer they say—cummed ower an' slippit intil my han' a copy o' a ressylushin that he wuz gaun till propose. So whun the tither man had din, Mister Mucknattan read his ressylushin, sayin' jest what A had advised. The Moderater didnae seem willin' till pit it till the hoose at furst; hooaniver he seen it pleesed the fowk, an' it wuz passed. A hale lot o' the meinisters gethered roon me an' shuk han's wi' me, an' tell't me hoo they admired my speech, an' that ony yin o' them wud fill the pulpit in Ballycuddy at ony time A axed them.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.

WE hae cum here the nicht, my freens, tae talk aboot "licht" —yin o' the greatest blissins that iver wuz gien tae sinfu' man, an' there's naebuddy needs licht mair nor the fowk in Ballycuddy. A wud propose tae divide my discoorse intil three heids :—

1. The licht o' the past.
2. The licht o' the present.
3. The licht o' the future.

Noo, the furst licht that we read aboot is the licht o' the sun an' mune, an' A dinnae see ony better lichts onywhaur. An' jist luk hoo nicely things ir arranged. Whun the sun gangs doon at nicht the mune rises. There's sum fowk an' they think that the sun shud niver set, an' they say that we shud hae a mune ivery nicht. But, my freens, it's impossible tae pleese iverybuddy. Sum fowk ir aye grumblin'. There's Jamey Scullion, an' iver since he went till Ameriky till see what o'clock it wuz, he keeps tellin' iverybuddy that we hae nether a sun nor a mune in this cuntry like what they hae there. A deny that! A say that A dinnae care whaur ye gang in a' this mortal wurl', ye may hae a *warmer* sun or a *bigger* mune, but A'll stake the sun an' mune o' ould Irelan' agenst iver anither yin in a' creation.

Besides, my freens, dinnae beleev fowk that tells ye there's mair nor yin sun. Whun they say that they're jest talkin' blethers. There's only the yin sun that ye see ivery day, an' he niver had a brither in his life. But A'm o' the opeenyin that we dae get a new mune ivery month, because ye hae a' notised that whun the mune furst shows hersel' she's a wee young thing jist like a—a—what'll A ca' it? Like a wee bit hoop, if A may sae speek, an' nicht by nicht she grows bigger an' bigger till she's the size o' a kert wheel; then she begins till melt awa' agen till ye cleen loss sicht o' her, an' what becomes o' her is mair nor A can tell. A used tae be akwant wi' a seafarin' man, an he tell't me that yin time whun he wuz at the end o' the wurl' he saw thoosans o' auld munes lyin' piled on the tap o' yin another, wi' the middle burned oot o' them, an' jist lukin' fur a' the wurl' like auld griddles. Noo, as A said afore, we cudnae expekt a mune ivery nicht, but mony a time A hae thocht tae mysel' that it's a peety there wuznae twa munes. They cud tak it time

"My guidness!" sez I, "hoo wuz that?"

Sez he, "the Elecktrickety got a haud o' me, an' A cud nether move nor speek."

Hooaniver, the truth cum oot yin day. A met a man that ken'd Jamey an' had releeved him. Jamey had been takin' a wheen half yins, an' didn't he button his tapcoat roon the powl, an' his heid wuz sae throoither that he didnae ken what wuz wrang, an' he stud till he wuz very neer foondered.

A hae kep ye far ower lang, but sum ither time A'll mebbe gie ye mair infurmayshin.

THE BALLYCUDDY MEINISTER.

OOR meinister got a call frae anither kongreygashin, an' like the maist o' the clergy he akseptit it acause the fowk wur able tae pye mair steepin's an' tae gie him a lerger selery. He tell't the elders an' the kommittee that he wuz gaun tae lee us, as Providence had called him away till anither pert o' the vinyerd, an' that we shud luk oot fur a suksessor. Peggy says if the selery hadnae been bigger he wud niver a let on that he heerd Providence.

Weel, as ye a' ken, A'm yin o' the elders o' the Ballycuddy kongreygashin'; lang Sam Stevenson's anither, Neevin Erturs is anither, an' Jamey Menyarry's yin tae. A meetin' o' us a' wuz held yin nicht in the seshin hoose, an' the meinister made oot a list o' the names o' men that we shud ax tae cum an' preech trial sermuns till us, an' he tell't us that as the fame o' Ballycuddy kongreygashin had trevilled ower the hale universal wurl' we wud hae nae trubble in gettin' a heech-cless meinister.

"An' hoo diz yer reverence accoont fur that?" sez Jamey Menyarry.

"Weel, indeed," sez he, "we maun thank Rabin Gordon fur it in the furst instance, an' A think A may add tae that, my ain humble talents, in the second place."

"Heer, heer," sez Neevin Erturs.

Weel, we brocht the meinisters yin efter anither tae preech till us, an' we hel' a kommittee meetin' ivery Monday nicht tae discuss

the qualifikashins o' the men, an' railly A did think they niver wud be pleesed in yin. At last yin nicht A said till them, sez I—

"My freens, as A'm the auldest man amangst ye, A think it's time tae tell ye that ye shud mak a choice. This wark is coastin' a dale o' money, an' we railly can not haud oot till it ony langer. Ye jist min' me o' the man that went oot till a thorn hedge, fur till cut himsel' a stick. He walkit an' he walkit, passin' by dizens o' darlin' sticks an' aye thinkin' that he micht licht on a better yin, till lo an' behold ye he cum till the end o' the hedge an' had tae content himsel' wi' an' auld crooked runt. So tak care, noo, that a wheen o' ye disnae be pittin' yer fut in it."

"Weel, an' wha wud ye suggest?" sez Sam Stevenson.

"Ye cudnae gang wrang in ony yin that haes preeched till us yit," sez I.

"Blethers an' balderdash," sez Jamey Menyarry, "there's no' yin o' them worth a thranyeen."

Sez Neevin Erturs, sez he, "A wuz rael weel pleesed wi' Mister Campbell, he wuz sae weel larned; why the half o' his sermun wuz Greek an' Haybroo. An' then he's a big, strong, coorse-voiced man. A think he wud dae richtly."

"But no yin o' us understud his Greek an' Haybroo," sez I.

"Nae metter fur that," sez Neevin; "it showed that he understud the Skripters, an' ye'll niver get me till consent till ony man cumin' here that disnae understan' Letin, Greek, an' Haybroo."

Sez Jamey Menyarry, sez he, "A thocht he wuznae a'thegither sound in his doktrins; he wuznae half kelvinistik eneuch fur Bellycuddy."

"Oh, deed," sez Neevin, "there may be sumthin' in that; an' A may tell ye that my mistress is no' in terble luv wi' him."

"Hoo's that, Neevin?" sez I.

"Why, she says he's nae guid at the preechin' ava; an' that as far as his prayers ir concerned they micht dae fur new born waens, but they're nae menner o' use tae grown up fowk."

A lauched, an' sez I, "did ony o' ye see what some fella frae Bilfast wrote on a leaf o' an auld Bible here the tither Sabbath?"

Nane o' them had seen them. So A read the verses, an' here they ir—

If good King David ever should
  Unto this church repair,
And hear his Psalms thus warbled out,
  My God ! how he would swear.
Or, if St. Paul should chance drop down—
  From higher scenes abstracted—
And hear his Gospels thus explained,
  My God ! he'd go distracted !

"They're no' terble complimentary," sez Sam Stevenson, "hooaniver, let us gang on wi' oor business o' choosin' a meinister."

Then A proposed a nice young man ca'd Duncan. Sum o' them thocht he wuz ower young; Jamey Menyarry objekted till his weerin' a mustashe, an' Neevin Erturs said his sermun hadnae a wurd o' Greek or Haybroo in it.

Noo, A had taen a terble fancy tae Mister Duncan, an' so had Peggy, fur he had taen his denner an' tay in oor hoose the day he preeched till us; so A raisoned wi' them a while, an' sez I, "it's a sma' faut tae be young; as fur his mustashe he'll mebbe shave it aff, an' we can ax him whuther or no' he kens Greek an' Haybroo. A wud advise ye tae write him a letter axin' him till cum doon here again, an' we can hae a talk wi' him' an lern a' aboot him."

This wuz agreed to, an' oor seekaterrier wrote till him fixin' a Sunday fur him till cum.

Peggy an' me had a crack aboot the metter, an' A promised her that A wudnae lee a stane unturned tae get Mister Duncan appointed. A sut doon an' A wrote him a lang letter sayin' that A wud like him tae be oor meinister, an' tellin' him the soart o' elders we had, an' the questyirs they wud likely pit tae him, an' that he wud hae tae talk Letin, Greek, an' Haybroo, ancitera, ancitera.

Weel, that wuz a' richt, an' on the Sunday mornin' that he wuz tae cum A met him at the Bellycuddy junkshun. He gied me the quer hearty shake o' the han', an' sez he. "Mister Gordon, A'll niver forget yer kindness as lang as A leev. A hae taen a grate noshin tae cum amang ye at Bellycuddy, an' A hope A'll be successful."

"Wi' a' my heart A hope ye wull," sez I.

"But there wur things in yer letter," sez he, "that A cudnae think o' complyin' wi'."

"What wur they?" sez I.

"A'll no' shave aff my mustashe," sez he; "na, A wud loas the sityeashin furst; then A maun hae instreymental music in the kirk, an' if onybuddy wants a waen chrisend at their ain hoose A wudnae like tae refuse."

"An' what aboot the Letin, Greek, an' Haybroo?" sez I.

"A cannae speek a wurd o' yin o' them," sez he.

"Am' sorry fur that," sez I; "A micht get ye ower the tither points, but Neevin Erturs wull stan' oot fur the deid langwidges. He's jist as thrawin' as a dug's hin' leg, so he is."

"Weel," sez he, "A hae a plan in my heid fur gettin' ower that deffikulty. Diz Erturs speek Letin or Greek?"

"Not him," sez I, lauchin'; "he harly kens B frae a bull's fut."

"Can ony o' the kongreygashin talk Letin or Greek?" sez he.

"Na, no' yin," sez I.

"Very weel," sez he; "tell naebuddy what haes passed atween you an' me, an' A'll manage that point. A can talk Eerish like a book, an' A'll try Erturs wi' that."

"Noo," sez I, "A'll lee ye here, fur A dinnae want ony o' the elders tae see me wi' ye afore the sermun, but ye maun tak yer denner wi' us. Peggy haes killed a darlin' hen fur ye, an' efter we pit it oot o' the road we can talk ower kirk affairs."

A left his reverence then an' didnae gang tae the meetin'-hoose till it wuz time tae begin. Mebbe Mister Duncan didnae astonish me. Whun he wuz readin' a chapter in Proverbs he stappit at the foarth verse, an' sez he—

"My deer freens, the beauty o' that verse haes always delighted me; an' yit, as the translaters give it here, it fa's far short o' the sublime rendering in the Haybroo tongue. You may not a' comprehend that tongue, yet A cannae refrain frae givin' it tae ye."

Weel, he put the verse intil Eerish, an' A'm shair the fowk a' thocht it wuz Haybroo. A lukit at Neevin Erturs an' A cud see his face growin' as pleesint as a simmer day, an' frae that minit he niver tuk his e'e aff the meinister. But his reverence hadnae din, fur whun he had read a bit farder, he sez—

"Let me read that verse again, dear freens, an' then if A gie ye the Greek vershin ye wull not, I trust, konsider me paydantik."

Weel, whun he gied them that, A notised Erturs nudgin' Wully Gunyin' wi' his elbow.

By that time his reverence had finished the chepter, an' as he closed the book, sez he—

"The Letin tongue is likely taught in yer schools here, an' A wud ax ye tae get yer boys tae give you this beautifu' chepter in that langwidge, so that ye may lern its rael force. A neednae quote the Letin, lest ye micht think me vain, an' vanity is a thing that A detest."

That wuz a settler, an' whun the samm wuz gien oot A heerd Erturs whusprin' tae Gunyin—

"That's the man fur Bellycuddy."

The meinister preeched a maist darlin' sermun, an' whun the hale servis wuz ower, we tuk him intil the seshin room tae hae a talk wi' him.

Neevin Erturs gruppit his reverence by the han', an' sez he—

"A niver heerd better preechin' in Bellycuddy; it wuz a rael bully sermun an' nae mistak'."

"A'm gled ye wur pleesed," sez the meinister, "an' A hope a' the tithers is o' the same opinyon."

"Fur my pert," sez I, "A hae nae fault tae fin'. The tithers may speek fur theirsels."

Sam Stevenson axed his reverence if he thocht he wuz kelvinistik eneuch fur a cuntry kongreygashin.

"A think my views on that point are sound, an' wull stan' the test," sez his reverence.

"Ir ye a merried man?" sez Jamey Menyarry.

The meinister lauched, an' sez he—

"Weel, A em not; but that can be easily richtit, A suppoas."

"It can, indeed," sez I, "an' we hae sum fine bonny lasses here. A wush ye had a seen my dochter Susanna afore she merried the rivetter's clark on the Queen's Island. She wud a pleesed ye a' tae pieces, an' A wud a been chermed tae a haen a meinister fur a son-in-law."

His reverence smiled, an' thankit me fur my kindness.

"What hae ye tae say aboot the instraymental musik questyin?" sez Neevin Erturs.

"In that metter," sez his reverence, "we shud be guided by the majority o' the flock under oor cherge."

"That may be a' richt," sez Neevin, "but what's yer ain noshins on the subjek?"

"A beleev the Bible approves o' the use o' instraymental

musick," sez he, "an' that bein' the case there's naethin' mair tae be said aboot it."

"That's yin fur you, Neevin," sez I—

"Oh, ay," sez he, "you'll agree wi' that, Rabin."

"A shairly will," sez I, but the denner will be gettin' cauld, so if ye hae ony mair questyins tae ax ye had better hannel yersels."

"There's the chrisenin' o' waens," sez Jamey Menyarry, "A'm agen the daein' o' that in their ain hooses. A think their parents shud a' cum oot tae the meetin'-hoose."

"A quite agree wi' ye in that," sez the meinister; "but there may be excepshinal cases. The parents may be unable fur certain raisons tae cum oot, an' A'm shair ye wud a' be wullin' tae tak these things intil konsiderashin."

"Tae be shair we wud," sez Menyarry.

"Weel, A think there's no muckle atween us," sez I, "an' if it's agreeable tae the tithers here we can call a meetin' o' the kongreygashin an' talk the hale thing ower."

That wuz agreed tae, an' A tuk the meinister awa tae my hoose fur his denner. We had a lang talk there, an' railly a nicer man A niver did see.

The kongreygashin decided on givin' him the call, an' we had a great day o' it at the ordinashin, an' a big denner an' suree. A'll very likely let ye heer aboot them at sum ither time.

THE ROYAL VISIT TO IRELAND.

LETTER FROM "ROBIN" TO H.R.H. PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR (AFTERWARDS DUKE OF CLARENCE).

Ballycuddy, County Down,
May the tenth, 18 and 80.

"Dear Prince Albert Victor,

A'm prood tae heer that ye ir railly cumin' tae see Bilfast agen. Mony an' mony a time Peggy an' me haes been crackin' aboot ye since the last time that ye cummed wi' yer da an' ma. There wuz yin thing aboot ye, dear Prince, that struck Peggy mair nor ocht else, an' that was this: Ye'll hae min' o' that terble wat day that cummed on; weel, whun the fowk wuz cheerin' ower ocht ye sut in the kerridge wi' yer hat aff, an' the rain teemin' on ye like oot o' dishes. Peggy said ye wur a guid waen, an' wud mak a gran' King sum day,

IZEK NEELSON IN BALLYCUDDY.

(Written in February, 1880.)

THE Ballycuddy meinister haes been in deliket helth this while back, an' we made him gang frae hame fur six weeks, till see if it wud dae him ony guid. The tither rulin' elders an' mysel' tuk in han' fur till get pulpit supplies at the least poasible expense durin' the time oor ain man wuz awa, but it turned oot a mair deefeekwult job nor we thocht it wud. The steepins dinnae amoont tae terble muckle in the year, an' atween the bad times an' the hardness o' the fowk, it's railly no' worth while liftin' a kollekshin on Sundays fur a' the wheen happins we get.

Weel, we got the furst three Sundays ower athoot bein' at muckle coast, ayont the men's trevillin' expenses, but efter the third Sunday, the questyin wuz wha wud we get nixt. We wur fair tired rinnin' throo toon an' cuntry lukin' fur meinisters, an' so, whun we met on the Monday nicht in the seshin-hoose, Neevin Erturs proposed that we shud pye the nixt men a pun' apeece, an' no' be unner ony mair compliments.

"Whaur's the money till cum frae?" sez lang Sam Stevenson.

"Rabin Gordon's the treasurer," sez Jamey Menyarry, "an' he'll be able till tell us hoo the funds stan'."

"There's no' a shillin' till spare," sez I.

"Oh, weel, ye'll advance the money," sez Neevin.

"A wull not, indeed," sez I, "an' afore A let the kongreygashin get intil debt A'll preech mysel', so A wull."

A wush ye had seen them lukin' at yin anither whun A said that.

"A'm in doonricht ernest," sez I, "A man that's fit till be a rulin' elder shud be fit till preech a sermun, so A propose that the fower o' us taks the pulpit time aboot fur the nixt wheen Sundays."

"A'm very shair A cudnae preech," sez Jamey Menyarry.

"Weel, ye michtnae dae it as weel as the meinister," sez I, "but ye dinnae ken what ye'll dae till ye try."

We talkit the thing ower fur a guid while, till at lang an' last Jamey proposed that we shud draw cuts fur wha wuz till preech furst. What dae ye think but it wuz me that drawed the lang

stray. A harly knowed whaur A wuz stannin'; hooaniver, A wudnae let them see A wuz ocht put aboot, so A tell't them that A wud ether preech mysel' or fin' a substytute.

Whun A went hame A cudnae tak' my supper, an' Peggy axed me if ocht had vexed me.

"Na, dochter," sez I, "no' very muckle."

"An' what ir ye thinkin' aboot?" sez she.

"A'm wonnerin' whaur A'll tak' my text frae," sez I.

"Yer no' gaun till turn preecher, ir ye?" sez she.

"A doot A maun try it, dear," sez I, an' then A tell't her a' aboot it, an' that A maun ether preech mysel' or get sumbuddy that wud dae it fur me. The crayter, she bates ocht! She put her heid atween her han's, an' studyed fur a wheen minits, an' then sez she—

"A'll haud ye Mister Neelson wud cum."

"Wha is he?" sez I.

"The Reverend Izek," sez she.

"The deer wuman," sez I, "what puts that in yer heid?"

"Susanna's man haes freens that gangs till his meetin'," sez she, "an' mony a time A hae heerd him tellin' what a fine cliver man Mister Neelson is. They say there's no' the likes o' him in toon or cuntry, an' he haes been a' ower the Three Kingdoms preechin' an' makin' speeches."

"A doot he wud cherge us ower muckle," sez I.

"Na, Rabin, dear," sez she, "that's the best o' it; he wudnae tak' ony money, an' he wudnae let the fowk pye him ether steepins or '*ragin' dumeney*.'"

"That's the man fur Ballycuddy!" sez I, "get me the pen an' ink, dochter."

A wrote a big lang letter till my dochter Susanna's man jist there an' then, tellin' him a' the sirkumstances, an' sayin' that if he cud prevail on Mister Neelson till preech a sermun till us on the Sunday cumin, A wud be fur iver obleeged till him. On the nixt Friday A got an answer frae my son-in-law, sayin' that Mister Neelson wud dae what A wantit, an' that he wud cum doon wi' his reverence on the Sunday mornin' till show him the road. My! but A wuz prood, an' Peggy wuz the same. We made it up atween us that we wud ax him an' the tither elders till tak' their denner wi' us, an' she begood till mak' the hoose luk as tidy as poasible.

Weel, A made nae saycret o' it, an' the news flew like wull-fire, an' it wuz the talk o' the hale cuntry side.

Whun Sunday cum A went till meet Mister Neelson an' my son-in-law at the train. A had niver seen the gentleman afore, an' whun A met him A tuk aff my hat an' made a low boo. My son-in-law tell't him wha A wuz, an' he shuk han's wi' me, an' said he hopit A wuz weel. A cudnae help admirin' him he lukit sae smert an' cliver, an' he steppit alang the road jist like an offiser in the ermy. A notised him squeezin' his lips thegither as close as ocht, an' heerd him talkin' till himsel', an' A thocht it wuz his sermun he wuz gaun ower; but jist wi' that he named my name a wheen times ower an' ower, an' sez he, lukin' at me as sherp as ocht, sez he—

"Ir you the celebrated individyal commonly known as 'Rabin?'"

"Yes, sir," sez I, liftin' my hat.

"Ye wur rether severe on the Meer o' Bilfast," sez he.

"Oh, no, sur," sez I, "A hope no,' fur it wuz very kin' o' him till stap the proclaymashin fur me."

He talkit a wee bit aboot the Meer an' sum ither fowk that A didnae ken, an' A thocht frae his menner that he wuznae pleesed wi' them; but mebbe it wuz bekause they wurnae his releegin, or sumthin' o' that soart.

Whun we cum till the meetin'-hoose A wush ye had a seen it! They had furms set up alang the isles, an' there wuz fowk on the very pulpit ters. Mebbe A wuznae the prood man! Ivery e'e wuz on Mister Neelson as he steppit up the hoose like a lord, an' ye wud a heerd a pin fa'in. He gied oot a Samm, an' spent very neer an hoor expleenin' it. My! he's a quer weel lerned man. He tell't us hoo that he wuz a Greek an' Haybroo skolerd, an' kent a' the deid langwidges; that nae ither soart o' men wur fit till preech ony, an' he said hoo that King David didnae write a' the Samms, an' tell't us a hale lot of things that we niver heerd afore. At last he read oot his text, but said he didnae meen till preech a sermun, fur he had quat preechin' a'thegither, an' that he wud jist hae a talk wi' us. Weel, he tuk a tract or pamflet, that sum man had wrote, oot o' his pokit, an' read a wheen pieces oot o' it an' made remarks on it. Then he talkit a lang time aboot what he ca'd the 'year o' daylusion,' an' tell't us he had writ a book on it. Then he spauk aboot the failyer o' the craps an' aboot the Duchess o' Marlyborrow, but A thocht by his menner he wuznae pleesed wi'

that kin'-hearted lady. Then he talkit a guid while aboot the Coonty Doon elekshun, an' aboot Mister Annera, an' Lord Kaselray, an' a man he ca'd his Feyther Keyhill, an' aboot Mister Parnell in Ameriky. A declare but A niver heerd sich a sermun. The maist o' the fowk likit it, but sum wae or ither A thocht it had a quer soond on Sunday an' frae a pulpit. A wush ye had seen hoo the fowk glowered at him wi' mooth an' een. He swung his erms roon him, an' drawed doon his broos an' spauk sae cross like that ye wud a thocht he wuz angerry at iverybuddy he talkit aboot. Jist whun he wuz in the middle o' a reglar ragin' match he stappit like a shot an' pointed his finger doon at the skulemaister, young Mister Jackson, that wuz sittin' busy takin' shorthan' writin' notes o' the sermun, an' sez he, as lood as ocht—

" Wha is that young man writin' doon there ? "

No yin spauk, an' fur aboot a minnit ye cud a heerd a pin drappin'. Mister Neelson spauk oot then, an' sez he—

" Put up yer book an' pencil, young man, an' lern till conduct yersel' in a place o' wurship."

Puir fellow, but A did think a peety o' him. He's sae prood o' being fit tae tak' notes, but he drappit his wee book as if it had burned him, an' stoopit doon till hide his heid. Then Mister Neelson went on as if naethin' had happint. He tuk twa full hoors fur his discoorse, an' A wuz rael gled whun he had din.

A had invited the tither elders tae tak' their denner wi' us, an' whun we got hame Peggy had ivery thing laid oot in gran' style. Mister Neelson tuk his denner richt an' hearty an' then we a' drawed oor chers roon the fire.

" A hope ye wur a' pleesed wi' the service," sez Mister Neelson.

" Indeed we wur," sez I, " an' there wuznae as mony fowk in that hoose iver in my days afore."

" A'm gled o' that," sez he.

Sez I, " Sur, it wuz rael kin' o' ye till cum, an' A'm shair we're a' fur iver obleeged till ye."

" Weel, A think we ir," sez Neevin Erturs, " an' A wuz wonnerin', sur, if ye wud gie us a lekter in the skulehoose sum nicht."

" Fur what purpose ? " sez his reverence.

" Weel, sur," sez Neevin, " we hae an Orange Ludge that meets here, an' we wur thinkin' o' biggin' a Hall, an' A'm shair we cud sell a queer wheen tickets if yer reverence wud gie us a lekter on the Battle o' the Boyne."

Mister Neelson begood a crackin' his heels on the hearthstane, an' squeezin' his lips thegither ower ocht. A declare A heerd his teeth skringin', an' my son-in-law gied me a kick on the shin, an' then stuck his face intil his hankerchey. His reverence spauk at last, an' sez he—

"Orangeism is the bane o' the cuntry, sur!"

"It is that, sur," sez Jamey Menyarry, "baith bane an' muscle; an' A'm gled till heer that yer yin o' the richt soart."

A seen his reverence gettin' black in the face wi' anger, an' sez I—

"Weel, weel, we can talk aboot that agen; his reverence haes din very weel at this time, an' frae what A hae heerd o' him he's aye reddy tae gie a helpin' han'. Excuse me, sur," sez I, "fur makin' sae free, but A'm o' the opeenyin there's no' mony men amang oor clergy as cliver as you ir, an' it's weel fur them that can heer ye ivery Sunday."

"Yer a sherp, sensible man, in yer ain wae," sez he, "an' the opeenyin o' an honest man like yersel' is wurth mair nor the empy puffin' o' a thoosan' 'sikafants' that we meet ivery day."

He riz till gang awa then, an' he wudnae let me see him till the train. Whun he wuz shakin' han's he made me promis till call an' see him the furst day A wuz in Bilfast.

"A wull indeed, sur," sez I; "whaur dae ye leev?"

"At the heid o' the Shankill Road," sez he.

"The deer man!" sez Neevin Erturs, "but is that whaur ye leev? Man, that's a quer place wi' Orangemen! Yer in safe quarters there, sur."

My! if ye had seen the luk he gied Neevin fur makin' sae free wi' him, an' A think he wud a chackit him fur his imperence if my son-in-law hadnae tuk his reverence by the erm, an' said it wuz neer train time. We stud lukin' efter him till he wuz oot o' sicht. A wull shairly gang an' see him at his ain hoose in Bilfast.

BETTY MEGIMPSEY.

A'M the prood man since my brither Wully cum hame. A aye thocht A wud leev till see him, but the thing cum on me sae sudden like that A can harly beleev it's true, an' mony a time A hae tae gie mysel' a guid shake tae mak' shair A'm no' dreamin'.

He's giely altered is Wully, an' there's no' yin kens him. It bates a' what the book lernin' an' gettin' oot intil the wurl' a while diz fur fowk. There's nae doot it rubs the rust aff them onywae. My! Wully can talk like a squire, an' he haes ower ocht the nice claes an' grandyer. Bit his heart's jist whaur it wuz, an' what it wuz whun him an' me wur rinnin' thegither sumwhaur aff an' on aboot forty yeer ago, an' he'll sit at the fireside in his shirt sleeves an' crack till Peggy an' me fur hoors at a time. Bit the fun o' it is that he jist speeks like yin o' oorsels. He's no' like some fowk that ye can hardly tell a wurd they're sayin' efter been awa frae hame fur a twalmunth or less.

A hae been gie an' busy this wheen weeks back gettin' in the prittaes an' ither things. Waens, dear, it haes been a maist sayrious wunter. A wuz jist tellin' Wully that we hadnae haen ocht like it since afore he went awa. Weel, a buddy wud a thocht that we micht a lukit fur an erly spring, but indeed it haes been terble backward, an' laberin' men's that scarce that A didnae ken what fur till dae. If it hadnae been that Wully throwed aff his coat an' hanneled a spade like a man A wud niver a got my prittaes set ava.

Weel, Wully haes been ower the maist o' the wurl, but sumhoo or ither unless ye draw it oot o' him he disnae talk muckle aboot what he haes seen. He's a kin'-hearted crayter an' wud gang ony length oot o' his road till obleege a freen.

A seen him pokin' thro yin o' his trunks the tither nicht, an' at last he brocht oot a wee canvas bag, an' shuk it up at my face, an' sez he—

"Dae ye ken what's in that, Rabin?"

"It jingels like money," sez I.

"An' that's jist what it is," sez he.

"Can ye tell me', sez he, "if auld Betty Megimpsey's aye till the fore?"